

# BOBBILI

A BIOGRAPHY .



*By Nilkan Perumal*










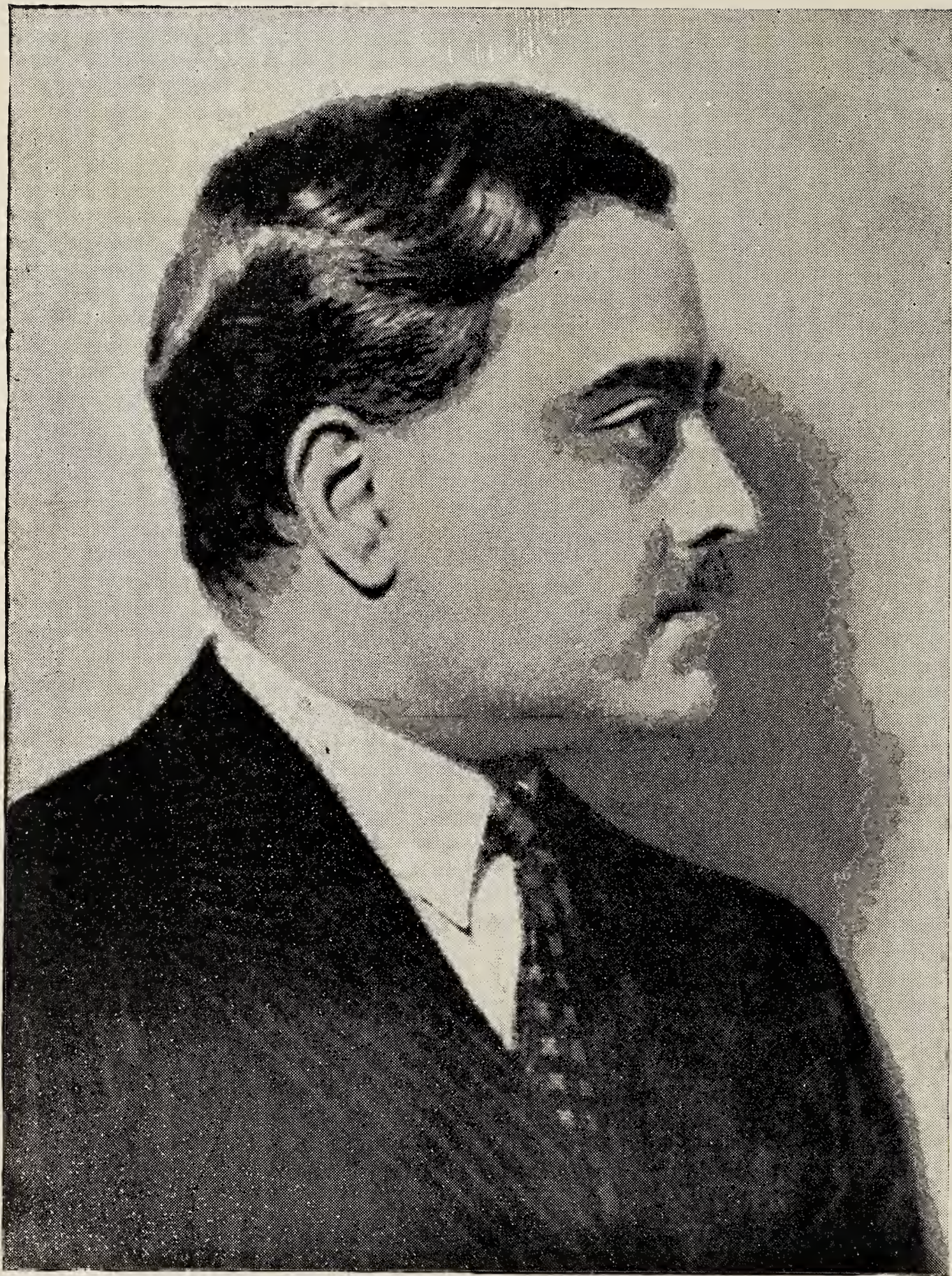




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THE RAJA OF BOBBILI, K.C.I.E.  
*Chief Minister, 1936*



# BOBBILI

BEING A BIOGRAPHY OF SRI VARU SIR RAMA-  
KRISHNA SWATCHELAPATHI RANGA RAO, THE  
13TH RAJA OF BOBBILI, WHO WAS CHIEF  
MINISTER OF MADRAS (1932—36)

*By NILKAN PERUMAL*

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“I have known the Raja Saheb of Bobbili for many years. He became Chief Minister of Madras at a very young age. He is a man of great earnestness and ability.”

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN  
*Vice-President of India*





## *Preface*

*That man is great, and he alone  
Who serves a greatness, not his own  
For neither praise nor pelf  
Content to know and be unknown,  
Whole in himself*

—MEREDITH

When I returned to India in 1935, after a decade's travel, study and stay in many countries, I found the Raja Saheb of Bobbili, Sri Varu Sir Ramakrishna Swatchelapathi Ranga Rao, K.C.I.E., as the Chief Minister of Madras. The fact that at the early age of *thirty one* he assumed that important office excited my curiosity. He is the youngest Indian to be an elected Chief Minister of a State in India, in all recorded history of the *Twentieth Century*. I, who had the good fortune to meet great people the world over, was all too keen to meet the Raja, but an interview with him in those days, I was told, was next to impossibility.

The very next year, a chance came my way, and I was put into the Raja's presence in the drawing room of his Madras residence *Branson Baugh*. His striking personality, musical voice, graceful mannerism, the measured words he spoke with dignity, all

overwhelmed me in a few seconds. I was then impressed that here was an Indian who exceptionally enough combined in himself *Genius* with *Character*. Since then, I would have met the Raja half a dozen times, during the last twenty three years.

Since his personality fascinated me even on the first day, I kept jottings of any information that came my way of him, from people who were better known to him, those who worked with him in the Madras Secretariat when he was Chief Minister, and from Justice Party politicians who had seen more of him. Then, it was not until the *Autumn* of 1955 that I finally decided I had better make an attempt to present his Personality to the public through the medium of a *Biography*. I worked on with newspaper files and reference books, printed copies of his speeches and such papers that I came across in my searches.

This is in no sense an *authorized* Biography. If I had the good fortune to have atleast some co-operation from the Raja, I feel I could have done my job better, especially if he were good enough to give me explanations I badly needed in some points connected with his politics. Not having had that help, I must ask the Reader to kindly forgive me if I had erred somewhere, but all I could say is that, I have worked on with facts, printed facts, and those told me by men whose versions I have no reason to doubt at all.

I have purposely kept my narration in this book to essential facts only, not indulging in



unnecessary elaboration. Publius Tacitus, the early Roman Historian aimed at putting a book into a *chapter*, a chapter into a *page*, a page into a *sentence*, as Lord Macaulay told us. I have tried a similar experiment here, in keeping this book to the absolutely necessary limit.

The Raja is undoubtedly an Indian Statesman of a type without parallel, as the facts in my studies and presentation would fully reveal. But, he is one of our least understood of great-men, I cannot help feeling, because he never resorted, at any time, to the myraid uses of personal publicity or self-advertisement in any shape or form. "A famous man once said that no great personage was ever understood by the people", observed Charlotte Cavandish, a British writer in 1930. At the same time, if I have presented the Raja in reality, which I believe, I have done, to the best of my knowledge and study of him, it will be of great satisfaction to me.

MADRAS  
September 1, 1960 }

N.P.





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THE RAJA  
*A Photograph of the 1920s*



## CHAPTER I

### HEROIC PEOPLE

An episode symbolic of the matchless heroism of the Indian people, their sense of honour, a high code of conduct even on the face of imminent danger and readiness to preserve self-respect inspite of a helpless situation, is what we learn with a sense of pride from the famous *Battle of Bobbili* which was fought on January 24, 1757.

It is an event of great significance to the student of history, but its importance is yet to be presented country-wide before the Indian people in proper perspective. To the *Andhras*, however, it is still a sacred lore of which they are so very proud.

Throughout the *Andhra State* even to-day, ballad-singers have it as a vital theme for their musical display. Operatic-players in rural parts frequently enact the story in matchless splendour and *Telugu* poets have immortalized it in colourful verses.

The *Velama Doras* of the Northern Circars who "esteem themselves the highest blood of native Indians, equal to



the Rajputs", are really a sensitive race. Their origin is traced to Rajasthan, from where during the Moghul invasions of the sixteenth century, they are reported to have come down to Warangal in the Deccan. Here they rendered loyal service to the Ruler of the place, Pratap Rudra. Later on, a group of them went North, and one amongst them founded the *Bobbili* State. His name was Raja Peddaraydu Garu, who received ruling rights over his territory for his services to Sher Mohomed Khan, the Nawab of Chicacole, an agent of the Moghul Emperor of Delhi at that time.

It was during the reign of the sixth Raja of Bobbili, Gopalakrishna Ranga Rao that the historic Battle took place, in the year 1757. Its story is vividly told by a few British historians like Orme, W. W. Hunter and Balfour, as also in Carmichael's *Manual of Vizagapatam District* and in Malcolm's *Life of Lord Clive*. The scene of battle is a little south of what is known as Bobbili-Town today, situated about 140 miles North East of Vizagapatam. The State, at that time, was of a small dimension, only twenty square miles.

Raja Gopalakrishna Ranga Rao was a courageous warrior who would not recognise with any importance his neighbouring ruler Vijayaramarazu of Vizia-

nagaram. Ranga Rao held him in contempt "as of low extraction". Their animosity went on growing, day after day. Vijayaramarazu then thought of putting an end to Ranga Rao and wipe out the State of Bobbili. To do so, he thought of taking the aid of M. Bussy, the Commander of the French Forces, then stationed in Masulipatam.

After several approaches, Bussy in a rather weak moment yielded to help Vijayamarazu. As a first step, the Frenchman sent word to Ranga Rao that he had better surrender his State and take in exchange "other lands of greater extent and value in other parts of the Province."

Ranga Rao treated the suggestion as a personal insult, and would not yield. He informed the French Commander as such. Enraged, Bussy soon after despatched a small detachment of Indian sepoy to give battle to Ranga Rao. When they came, they met with severe reverses in that forest area, thirty of them killed, many more wounded. The detachment then effected a hasty retreat.

Vijayaramarazu exploited this affront of Ranga Rao to his own advantage before Bussy, and soon a determined attack was planned. Bussy formed a European force of 750 men of whom 250 were horsemen,



the rest being artillery men with four field pieces. Vijayaramarazu on his side, contributed 11,000 peons and sepoy and the whole army marched towards Bobbili, early in January, 1757. Ranga Rao scenting battle, mustered strong his own men, but his was a very small force. He had only 250 men to bear arms and he got them all inside his solitary Fort. He also called in all his people, about five hundred women and children. Having thus done his duty, as befitting a superb warrior, he left everything else to destiny.

Now, the Fort in which Ranga Rao gathered his forces was a very small one, just two hundred yards in square, with a tower in each of its angles. Its wall was only 22 feet high and the rampart within was just built of tempered-clay in several layers. Judging from its structure, even according to old standards of Fort-construction, it was of no real value for a battle.

The invaders arrived in Bobbili on January 19 and waited, to study strategy. They first tried pincer-methods, but were disappointed. Then, they decided upon a real attack on the morning of January 24. By nine of the clock, four divisions of Bussy's forces had neared the Fort with scaling ladders and commenced their attack with canon-fire. For another hour, not a single aggressor had got over the

Fort's wall but many fell wounded from the counter-blow given by Ranga Rao's men, entrenched within the Fort. "Other parties followed with as little success" until all were so fatigued that a cessation was ordered by the French Commander.

Ranga Rao's men grew more and more animated as the sun went up high in the sky and were all the more determined to stiffen their defence. "The garrison fought with the indignant ferocity of wild beasts, defending their dens and families," to quote the very words of Historian Orme. They made the scaling of the walls from outside impossible. As the climbers came up a little in one or two places, they were pierced down by sharp, shining lances handled by Ranga Rao's men standing on the top of the walls, fighting hard like aroused tigers.

The battle slowly went on. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the pitch of it had come. Bussy's commander had ordered a little cessation before making an even more determined attack. Ranga Rao now finding himself utterly helpless, ordered to set fire to the whole Fort, and stab to death every woman and child within. It was hurriedly accomplished. His idea was that not a single person on his side should be violated by Vijayaramarazu's Forces. Once the massacre was complete, every



man in the Fort got on to the top of the walls to give stiff battle and die.

Mr. Law, Bussy's Commander advanced finally with his forces, and his men started the climb over the walls. After several ladders had failed, some of the men did reach the wall-tops. Now Ranga Rao, hastening to the defence of his tower, appeared on the top, but was instantly shot down by musket ball. With that, the spirit of the Garrison grew weaker, and his men saw that there was no other alternative but defeat. It was so.

Bussy's men under Commander Law soon gained the Fort. They got inside alright. Then to the invaders, "the transport of victory lost all its joys; all gazed at each other with silent astonishment and remorse, and even the fiercest could not resist a tear to the deplorable destruction spread before them," to put it in the words of Orme.

As Bussy's Forces stood witnessing this gruesome tragedy inside the Fort, an old man approached Law holding a child of six years by the arm. He spoke with feeling and flutter in his tone. "This is the son of Ranga Rao," he said, and added: "I have preserved him against his father's will." Law was very deeply touched. He received the boy with respect and

affection and later led him to Bussy who also received the lad with royal courtesies. He ordered him to be kept in great safety, with alert guards placed all round in his tent.

The drama did not stop there! Bussy's Forces were still in Bobilli. On the night of January. 27, Vijayaramarazu was stabbed in sleep in his tent. It appeared that four of Ranga Rao's men had stealthily got out of the surrendered Fort, and took shelter in a neighbouring forest. Two of them, somehow, prowled into Vijayaramarazu's tent at night and holding their breath, stabbed the Chieftain on his chest. The dying man's groan soon brought in sentries to his side, but the assailants seemed to have shouted out in evident mirth: "We are now satisfied." Vijayaramarazu was stabbed in 32 places on his body, it was said. The murderers were soon shot dead.

It was also said that had these two failed in their mission, two more were in hiding to make another attempt. "Rajput revenge is the same in all ages," comments J. T. Wheeler, author of a *History of India*, writing about this incident. Such has been the tale of heroism of a Bobbili Ruler, idolised by the historians and spoken of proudly by the *Andhra* people at all times, with fire and feeling in them.

Near a partially dried up tank in



Bobbili stands a solitary monument, just a small pillar, encircled by an iron-railing. At the foot of the pillar is a marble-tablet over which are inscribed, the following words :

“This Pillar is erected to mark the Fort of Bobbili which was attacked in January 1757 by Raja Vijayaramarazu of Vizianagaram, assisted by M. Bussy. The then Raja Ranga Rao, after fighting eight hours, finding it impossible to save his Fort and preferring death to dishonour, first put to death women and children in the Fort, then fighting, fell like another Leonidas with all his gallant band. Three nights afterwards, a faithful Sardar from Rajam, Tandra Papaya, effected an entrance, inspite of vigilant guard, into Vijayaramarazu’s tent and stabbed him to the heart.”

Such are the *Velamas* of Bobbili. They have been described by an old Historian this way :

“They are as a rule well-built and of war-like disposition. They are haughty and would’nt serve any but Chiefs of their own clan. They are daring, wreckless, highly self-respecting and gallant.”

### *The Maharaja*

Bobbili is an ancient State. Though no precise date of its foundation is traceable, we must assume it as in the *Seventeenth Century*. Perugunahs, Rajam,



Kavity and Sitanagaram are important places in this state which has an area of 300 sq. miles. Situated in a place surrounded by mountains all round, it has a population of over three lakhs of people according to the 1951 census. They are Muslims, Hindus, and Christians.

The State is rich in its *flora* and *fauna*. Rice, sugar-cane, ragi, oil-seeds and tobacco are abundantly grown. Small scale industries like cloth weaving and brass metal works also keep the people engaged. There is plenty of water for irrigation, and everywhere one came across small tanks, always filled with good clean water.

From the day of its founder Raja Peddarayudu to the present thirteenth Ruler of the State, Sri Ravi Raja Sir Ramakrishna Ranga Rao Swatchelapathi, progress had been phenomenal in that State. When the Madras State took over the administration from the Raja on September 7, 1949, the State's annual revenue was over eight and half lakhs of rupees.

Once the State came under British influence, the East India Company establishing its power in the *Northern Circars* about the year 1794, both the Representatives of the Company and the successive Governors of Madras under the British

Crown, paid great tributes to Bobbili Rulers for the progressive way in which the State had been administered. Madras Governor Grant-Duff in 1883 said that he found Bobbili "a clean well-kept town with all the amenities of an Anglo-Indian civilisation." A couple of years later, T. Pycroft, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras recorded; "The Governor in Council cannot compare any other *Zamindari* to it in any respect."

Though all the rulers of this State contributed their share in building up this State, three or four names are most remarkable. Of them, the Maharaja Sir Venkata Swatchelapathi Ranga Rao Bahadur G. C. I. E., C. B. E. (1862-1927) is of much significance.

A great Ruler, it was he who first put the State of Bobbili on the map of India. He was the eleventh Ruler, was adopted by the *Ranee* of the tenth Ruler Raja Sitharama Krishna Rayadappa Ranga Rao, who had no children. The Maharaja came from the Venkatagiri family, and was nine years when he was adopted. He assumed ruling powers in his nineteenth year and his was a remarkable reign for Bobbili for twenty five years and then, he abdicated in favour of his eldest son Raja Kumara Venkata Krishna Ranga Rao on November 6, 1916.



The Maharaja's rule was viewed beneficial by the people of Bobbili. He increased the revenues of the State, built hospitals, schools, markets, public halls, gave large amounts even to other forms of public charity and earned the gratitude of his people. When he abdicated, he said that during his stewardship of the State, he had showed an income of one crore and thirty six lakhs of rupees for the State in the aggregate, of which all but twenty three lakhs were spent. The expenditure was 9 lakhs in charities, 31 lakhs in paying *peishcush*, 2 lakhs in festivities and entertainments and 3 lakhs for himself personally, for the various tours he undertook.

The Maharaja was the first Indian nobleman from South India to visit England in 1893. He kept a *Diary* of this trip which is full of human interest. He went to visit Queen Victoria who was, then, in her Seventy-Fourth year. From London, he travelled by special train to Windsor and on meeting Her Majesty, he was so thrilled that he recorded in his *Diary* that it was perhaps the happiest day of his life till then. He visited various other famous Englishmen too, attended many social parties and returned to India in September that year, with the proud possession of an autographed photograph of the Queen. He also went on a wide tour

of England, Scotland and Europe, before getting back home.

When the Queen died, the Maharaja was sad. He asked his London Agent to place a wreath on her coffin, on January 22, 1901. She had been on the Throne for 63 years 7 months and 2 days, which was a very long reign, he had recorded. It was a great thing for the Queen to have passed *one thousand moons*, as the Hindus believed.

When the Queen's son Edward VII had his Coronation in 1902, the Maharaja paid his second visit to England. He was then the Representative of the Madras Presidency for the event, whereas Raja Sir Salavai Ramaswamy Mudaliar represented the city of Madras. This time too, he was widely entertained by friends and he gave away large sums of money for various charities in Britain.

The Maharaja was well respected by the successive Governors of Madras, and he had been representing the *Land holders* of South India in the Madras Legislative Council from 1896. He continued that representation for about fourteen years. On February 24, 1910 he was told by telegram that he had been appointed an *Executive Councillor* in Madras, that being the appointment of an Indian for the first time, for such an exalted position. "I



could not sleep that night", the Maharaja recorded, over-joyed by the distinction. He assumed office on March 20. With the Governor of that time Sir Arthur Lawley, his fellow-councillors were one M. Hamick and J. N. Atkinson.

The Maharaja did not hold that exalted office for long. He resigned the next year, in January 1911, purely for personal reasons. In accepting the resignation with regret, Governor Lawley paid a tribute to him through the *Government Gazette*, saying that the "Governor expressed appreciation of the valuable services the Maharaja did to the State during his term of office."

A few days after he assumed office, on the night of May 6, the Maharaja learned of the passing away of King Edward VII in England. For a memorial to the King, the Maharaja gave away his earned salary as Executive Councillor. A portion of his salary he gave away for the Foundation of the *Lawley Institute*, a fine Club House for the Indians visiting Ooty. The British people who were Rulers of India in those days were very conservative, and Indians going to Ooty did experience considerable difficulty in Club facilities. The Maharaja's name is a fond memory for the reason he came forward to establish this *Institute*. When a tablet was unveiled there in

memory of the Maharaja on May 17, 1958, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer who presided on the occasion, paid well merited tributes to the magnanimity of the Bobbili-family, saying that the "philanthropy of the present Raja" was in upholding the "noble traditions of his grand-father," who founded the *Institute*.

The Maharaja first married Rani Luxmi Venkatramanama in 1878 and had a son. But on his wife's death two years later, married again. She too died a couple of years later. Then again, for the third time the Maharaja married in 1888 and the third wife lived for long and died in April 1958, and by her too, he had a son, the Zamindar of Kirlampudi.

In 1916, the Maharaja wanted to abdicate his Rulership of the State. He had been then in charge of the State for 35 years, 3 months and 2 days and he considered himself the Ruler of Bobbili for the longest period. He was then fifty four years of age and the ruling powers he passed on to his eldest son Raja Kumara Venkatakrishna Ranga Rao, who was then 36 and who also was nominated that year to the Madras Legislative Council.

Somewhat a scholar himself, who appreciated the learned folk, the Maharaja had also written books, one giving advice



to landed-aristocrats of that time, and some commentaries on *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* with a rationlist outlook.

On the whole, his was a memorable reign. He died in his sixty-fifth year at his Ooty residence *Race View* in the mid-night of May 27, 1927. He was attacked by pneumonia, from which he did not recover. His embalmed body was brought to Bobbili by a special train and cremated in the family burial yard.

The Maharaja today occupied a respected place in the progressive history of Bobbili, himself having served the State and people with devotion. His is a name which is well remembered in Madras too, because he played a large part in the affairs of the Madras Presidency, generally.

When Gandhi was carrying on his *Passive Resistance Movement* in South Africa, he wrote to the Maharaja for funds and was responded to. He gave a handsome donation to Tagore also for the *Veswa Bharati* University. By his good deeds, he enshrined a place for himself in the hearts of his people in South India.

### ***A Humanitarian***

Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna Ranga Rao, the *Twelfth Ruler* of the State of

Bobbili was a remarkable personality who had a short and sweet life. He was born in 1880 as the first son of the Maharaj Sir Venkata Ranga Rao and was educated by an English Tutor Mr. Paine, and who later became Principal of the Presidency College in Madras and an Indian tutor Pati Suryanarayana. As a student, he was backward in *mathematics*, but was well up in many other subjects. He arduously studied such languages as *Hindi*, *Sanscrit* and *English*. Even as a boy, he developed interests in *Photography* and *Astronomy*. He was so interested in star-gazing, that he purchased a costly telescope to study the marvels of the skies. He had an intense interest in music too, that he played the piano often, and developed a taste for European music. In his own State, he studied Indian music under two experts, Vasa Krishnamurthy and Vasa Subbayya. He obtained from the Raja of Ettayapuram in the far South his book called *Sangitha Sampradaya Pravesani* (in *Tamil*) and got it rendered into *Telugu*. The Raja also gave handsome rewards to any of his servants who had musical gifts in them. Generally, he loved books, *Politics* and *Biography* in particular.

Neither was the Raja lacking interest in sports. He played tennis with ease, proved a good marksman and held



discussions with scholars each night till it was zero hour. Raja Kumara Venkata Krishna was an *artiste* all round. He got his cigarettes from England, also had his dresses stitched by *Savile Row* tailors. He took to the brush also, and produced paintings of lovely landscapes which were alluring to the eyes. He was the first to own a bicycle in Bobbili, and as he grew up, owned costly cars like *Diarec*, *Studebaker* and *Talbot*, which he was fond of driving. Such a gifted man always suffered from the hallucination that he would somehow die early, and this, he often confided to Bandari Ranganayakulu, his boyhood playmate.

On the side of administration of the State for three years, he attended the office and looked into all the work that he had to do. He was also for some years President of the Vizagpatam District Board. He was a good extempore speaker on the platform and effective in scholarly debates.

Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao and son Raja Kumara Venkata Krishna were very much devoted to each other. "They were like Dasaratha and Rama", one Bobbili citizen who knew them both closely for years, pointed out. The Maharaja on his part, was a big task master, and the son, ever dutiful to the father, carried out his wishes letter-perfect.

They got on well throughout. Once when the Maharaja was going to call on the Governor of Madras, he got into a *T-Ford* auto, where upon Raja Kumara Venkata Krishna told him; "Go by my *Talbot*". This got a rebuke from the Maharaja: "My son, a person is respected not by the car he rode in, but by the way he kept up his behaviour".

Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna, a big-bellied man, strongly built, tall and handsome was nevertheless a sickly man, somehow. Married in 1898 to Rani Luxmi Venkayamma, he became father of four children, of whom three are alive, his eldest son being Raja Ravi Varu Sir Ramakrishna Swatchelapati Ranga Rao, the present Ruler.

From August 10, 1910 Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna's health was badly affected. A famous physician of those days Col. Gifford treated him first. To get better medical care, the Raja went to England in July 1911, along with a Capt. Long, who was his A. D. C. While in England, the Raja also had a chance of attending the Coronation of King George V. On return, he did look better in health, and every one in his Royal household felt happy about it.

When the Maharaja abdicated in



favour of his son Raja Kumara Krishna who was thirty six then, additional responsibilities had been put on his shoulders. But he was equal to the occasion, and worked on smoothly. All the same, the Raja's health was slowly waning. He, however, carried on his duties for the next four years.

Then, on September 9, 1920 he went for a drive in the morning as usual, and on return, complained of bodily pain. He was laid to bed by ten o' clock in the morning. Dr. C. H. Alwar Chetty who was then Palace Doctor was called in, but nothing could be done to save him. The Raja died the next day, September 11. The whole State went into mourning for a deeply loved Ruler.

His body was kept in the *Durbar Hall* of the Palace, and streams of people went in there in tears to pay their last respects to a fine man, an extreme *humanitarian* in every sense of the word. Sentries stood by the body. Those who went near, prostrated before the Ruler's remains in worshipful fervour. In sadness stood by the side of the body his beloved son, the nineteen year old Ramakrishna Ranga Rao, also the fifty-eight year old father of the dead, Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao. Then, the body was taken out and allowed consumption by the flames in the

morning hours, at the family's burial ground. Thus was drawn the curtain over the life of one of the finest of mankind born in South India, a Ruler of men who was beloved to all those who had known him.

He coined an epitaph for himself to adorn his tomb—*Love conquers everything*. What a noble thought!

His wife Rani Luxmi Venkayamma lived upto fifty nine and died in December, 1943.



## CHAPTER II

### EARLY PROMISES

The white-painted majestic-looking *Lakshmi Vilas* Palace in Bobbili, basked in the bright sunlight of an October morning in 1906. State Officials and people moved about in ease attending to their work. The weather was some what mild. At regular intervals, the gong of the Palace sounded, notifying the people the passing hour.

On the first floor of the Palace was the children's nursery. Two or three little boys were playing. Two of them soon left. They had been trying to build a toy-castle with small wooden blocks painted in red, with black edges. They had tried their best, but the tricky blocks were as such ; they baffled and tired the children, that they left at last impatiently. They walked out of the nursery.

A little boy aged five was, however, adamant. He sat there with the castle-toy set, the wooden blocks strewn about in front of him on the priceless Persian carpet spread over the floor. He was trying his best to build up, with concentration and calculation. Evidently, he was a

born-Builder! Yes, we saw him as such when he grew up.

He was a remarkably handsome boy, with chubby cheeks and face on which we found two intelligent, sparkling eyes. He was dressed up in a pair of tight trousers of silk and a flowing shirt. He had a *Sirdar's* turban on the head and he wore shining black shoes, with socks to match. He sat cross-legged in concentration, visible on his pretty looking face. At a glance, he could be taken for a serenley sculptured piece of Augustus Rodin or a pleasing picture of Ruben like his *Blue-Boy*.

With the firmness of a Casabianca, he sat there, thoughtfully picking up the wooden blocks one after another and trying to fasten them together, to raise up the tiny castle. The more he tried, the more he seemed to fail! Yet, he was not vexed. He was all calmness and determination. He went about his task unruffled. Minutes passed, many of them. But, he did not bother about the time at all. He was only keen of the success of his self-chosen task.

A middle-aged English woman, his nurse, stood by him watching intently what the boy was doing. She had so much respect for the boy that she would not



command him at all. She came near him and reminded him gently of the time. Yes, it was time for lunch, tweve the hour. But, he looked her up for a while with a little smile, not parting lips, and waved his right hand without speaking. She too smiled a bit and waited.

The game went on, this castle-building effort of the Prince. At times, when he imagined that he had managed it after all, something had gone wrong again, and the little structure he built, tumbled down. With renewed vigour of the mind, he tried again. Perhaps, he might have known the story of Robert Bruce, that trials did lead one to thumping success. Or, he might have known the theory that anything attempted must positively be finished. Anyhow, he was at the job, trying to finish it before he rose up.

Now, there appeared the Prince's twenty-six year old father who straight walked up to his son. The boy got up reverentially befitting his winsome good manners and stood there with folded arms. "How about today's lessons, son?" the parent asked. That the lessons were over by ten of the clock, the Prince replied with promptness, speaking in perfect English. The father spoke no more, but walked away with his calm diginity. The boy sat down again at his self-chosen task.

Did not success come to him, who persued it with all the enthusiasm at his command? Yes, it was so here also. The Prince succeeded at last. He built the toy-castle alright, but not until it was ninety minutes in all!

Now, with supreme satisfaction and a little smile on his lips, he moved out of the place followed by his nurse. He straight walked into the dining room, where his grand father was waiting for lunch. They ate from the same plate. And, as they commenced the meal, the boy's father walked in there too, and made a casual remark; "You pet my boy too much and spoil him"! It was addressed to the *Grandpa* of the little Prince. There was no response to that remark, and the boy's father quietly moved out. The grand-father and grandson exchanged glances, but spoke nothing.

The Prince who would not give up building the toy-castle untill it was built, was a boy of such firm determination in any problem he faced in life. Any task he under-took, he would not leave undone. Like a rock-lizzard he stuck to his objective and struggled to the very last. Such a virtue in him was more and more evident as he grew up in life.

That was the picture of Sri Ravi Varu Sir Rama Krishna Swatchelapathi Ranga



Rao, the *Thirteenth* Raja of Bobbili, we saw in his boyhood. The Raja not only ruled Bobbili, but the whole of the Madras Presidency as well twenty six years hence from that day he sat building the toy-castle. He also built up the affairs of the Madras State in many respects. If childhood is in any way an index of the coming man, then we saw in the Raja so many admirable promises even in his childhood and boyhood, which were fulfilled even in his prime of youth.

Once when Ramakrishna was a *Page-boy* in 1912 to his grand father, the Maharaja, at a *Government House* investiture, gave the Youngman fond advice: "You shall not be content to hold the robe alone, but must rise up in life to wear the G. C. I. E. insignia". That hope was soon fulfilled. The boy did earn the K. C. I. E. distinction comparatively at the early age of *Thirty-four*!

### ***Birth and Youth***

Ramakrishna Ranga Rao was born at 11 o'clock on the night of February 20, 1901. When he in this world opened his eyes, the most overjoyed person in the Palace was the Prince's grand father, the Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao. He told his servants to jump about in joy, remarking that an heir to the Bobbili Ruling

House was born ! The next morning, the news was heralded to the people of the State by the distribution of sweets in town. The *Lakshmi Vilas* Palace bore a festive appearance. Prayers were said in the temples, and there was rejoicing unlimited everywhere.

As a child, Ramakrishna was somewhat playful. But, he was equally studious and was a picture of dignity. As a boy of five or six, he went to study between the hours of eight and ten in the forenoon, and two and four in the after-noon. Rest of the time in the day, he played about with other boys in the Palace premises, carefully watched by his European woman nurse and Indian servants. He played with balls, toys and games like *hide and seek*. He had three English tutors, H. C. Leclare, D. Gordon and F. H. J. Wilkinson and an Indian tutor Ramalingaswamy, who lived to a ripe old age in his *nineties*.

Ramakrishna was all devotion and respect to his tutors. There was no occasion for the tutor to chide his pupil. The Prince loved poetry very much and was fond of the classics in the *English* language. The poems of Shakespere, Milton, Shelly, all he had learnt by heart with ease and confidence, and often he sought explanations from the teacher, of



such verses which intrigued him a little. Wordsworth's *Intimation of Immortality* was a very difficult ode for any one to read through, but Ramakrishna had got it by-heart in no time, to the surprise of his *Don*. A deep thinker even from his very boyhood, he often put out his philosophic doubts and thoughts to his teachers and they wondered what a marvel was he! He had a fine taste for scientific studies too. But, where he was not distinguished was in studying Radhakrishnayya's book of *Mathematics*, but oven that, he slowly mastered. "I feared the boy very much", his tutor Ramalingaswamy gave out once, "because he was such a prodigy with too much brains for his age". Ramakrishna matriculated in 1918 as a privately-tutored student.

In his 'teens, he also developed a taste for such games as badminton and billards which he played in the Palace itself. He learnt to drive a car when he was barely thirteen years of age! Equally, he proved a good marksman, acclaimed as a good *shot* in the hunting-field.

Father Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna and the son were very fond of each other. The father every day made inquiries of the book lessons the son was studying. A keen interest was thus evinced by the parent in the youngman's progress in studies and

games. Indeed, Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna was very proud of his prodigious son whose remarkable brains as a boy gave great satisfaction to one and all in the Palace. But, the man of brains is also invariably one with an independent outlook on life, borne out of the self-esteem and self-confidence he developed.

Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao, the grand father was too affectionate towards his grandson. The boy was his very apple of the eye from birth. Now, when Ramakrishna was seventeen, the question of his marriage was discussed. The Maharaja wanted somehow that the young-man married from an ordinary *Velama* family in Bobbili, not from any aristocratic set-up. Ramakrishna had his own ideas. He had come across Luxmi Subadrayamma, a young pretty Princess of the Tallaprole *Zamindari* family, during his visits to Madras as a boy, in the company of the Maharaja. They had played together as children. The intelligent and shrewed Ramakrishna had decided to win the hands of that Princess long ago. But, the Maharaja was up against the proposal. Father Venkata Kumara Krishna was all for allowing his son to marry the girl of his own choice, who ever it be, but the *Grandpa* had his own rules to enforce, though not to be



taken seriously by the grandson! First, even the *Grandpa* appeared to have agreed to the youngman's wishes, remarking that this made a fine pair, but later on, he somehow, thought otherwise. This brought about a mild estrangement in feelings between the old Maharaja and Ramakrishna, but till Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna died, they kept up their relations without drifting towards a decline.

Ramakrishna's marriage actually came about after a year Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna died. He married the Princess of his choice in 1921. Though it was usually the custom among the *Velamas* to celebrate the wedding in the bride's place, Ramakrishna wanted it only in Bobbili. It was a three-day wedding, elaborately celebrated, Brahmin priests participating in the solemnization. The ladies on the occasion were all in *Purdah*, and the bride herself had not attained age, that time. Ramakrishna was only twenty, then.

Not only in this matter of wedding, the old Maharaja's feelings towards his beloved grandson went through a great change, once he took up ruling powers of the State on the demise of his father in 1920. They would not even talk to each other, it was said. The Maharaja who once told Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, in all

pride that his grandson would "build up Bobbili" beyond all greatness, the Maharaja who made it a point althrough to eat with his grandson from the same plate, the Maharaja who never went travelling anywhere without taking the boy, was now suddenly having a different outlook on him! Reasons were many. On taking up the stewardship of the State, Ramakrishna did not allow the old Ruler to interfere in any administrative matters. This vexed the Maharaja. He would rather have the grandson take his guidance, but oh, no, Ramakrishna knew his own worth and responsibilities that he felt he wanted no directives from any. Then, the Maharaja made attempts to take back the rulership of the State for himself, but in that, he did not succeed. If Ramakrishna were to surrender it, he told the old man, that he would want the monthly personal allowance the Maharaja himself then took from the State's coffers. For that, the Maharaja was unwilling. Indeed, matters went up to such a breaking point that once the Maharaja saw Lord Willingdon, the Madras Governor, to press him for the re-taking of the State into his hands. Willingdon gave sober counsel to the old Ruler as he said :

" Maharaja, you are a calm gentleman, your son was very intelligent. Your grandson is both."



The Maharaja had to take his retreat with a murmur. He did not like his grandson being all too enthusiastic in the Polo-field either! He feared there would be accidents and tragic consequences, but the Maharaja did not perhaps understand the daring nature of modern youth. With all such differences, both the Maharaja and Ramakrishna had great mutual love in their bosom, there was not the least doubt. When the Maharaja died in 1927, Ramakrishna felt all too sad as he stood at the burial-yard performing the last rites for the departed Ruler. "A great man who had done great things for the State and the people", he unreservedly spoke out about the Maharaja to every one who called to condole the death.

### *Installation*

On November 30, 1881 the Maharaja Sir Venkata Swatchelapathi Ranga Rao was installed on the throne of Bobbili, but his son Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna could not similarly be enthroned. Reason was, the Maharaja was then alive. Even so, when Raja Rama Krishna Ranga Rao succeeded to rulership on the sudden death of his father on September 11, 1920, there was no installation ceremony, since the old Maharaja was still alive. Finally, when he died in the summer of 1927, Raja

Ramakrishna Ranga Rao's installation had to take place formally in the month of February the next year. It was a seven-day celebration in Bobbili.

On this occasion, the Raja gave a month's salary as *bonus* to all State officials, also presented them with clothing. Thousands of poor people were also fed on the occasion.

The celebrations began on the first day of February. Several *Zamindars* and British officials in the Madras Presidency graced the occasion with their presence. In the evening of the first day, the Raja walked to the Family temple of *Sri Venugopalaswamy* in procession with music and decorated elephants, to invoke the blessings of God and to take His permission. The second day, the big installation ceremony took place in the *Durbar Hall* of the *Lakshmi Vilas Palace*. The function commenced at half past eight in the morning. The whole place was tastefully decorated with flowers and festoons.

Famous Telugu Poet Venkata Sastri narrated praise worthy poems, calling upon the Gods to bless the function and the Bobbili Royal Household. The Raja after bathing in *Ganges* water and respectfully taking the blessings of his mother, came in.





ON INSTALLATION DAY  
*February 2, 1928*







He was dressed in a long coat of white silk and trousers, wearing his emerald garland around the neck and sword fastened to his side, walking with grace and charm, when all eyes were on his brilliant personality. As he did so, fifteen guns boomed a big salute. The Raja also carried with him the royal-ring and his seal of office. As he entered the *Durbar Hall*, every one present there got up and greeted him. The Raja walked straight to his *Throne of Gold* valued at more than fifty thousand rupees, while the distinguished guests sat on chairs of silver. Then, Brahamin priests who had specially come from holy Benares, stood on their knees and chanted verses in honour of the Raja, seeking the blessings of the Gods to come on him.

After the installation ceremony which lasted about three hours in all, a number of speeches were made. *Addresses* were presented, congratulating the Ruler, who also made a brief reply. Said he :

“I am very much pleased by the kindness shewn to me. I am glad of the loyal sentiments expressed here. I am bound to do good to the people. It is my duty.”

The same night, gifts were presented to the Raja, the occasion being referred to

as *Nazar* presentation. Then, there was a nautch party to entertain the guests.

The third day, Mrs. Souter the wife of the Collector of Vizagapatam performed a formal ceremony of opening a *Baby Welfare Centre*. A little later, the late Dr. Sir C. R. Reddy, Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University unveiled a portrait of the late Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao. Again, in the evening, more *Public Addresses* were presented to the Raja felicitating, after which, a famous singer of those days, Bangalore Nagaratnam, gave a music performance.

During the following three days, the guests and the Raja went about on *shikar* to the Adukonda Forest and as many as ten wild pigs were *sticked*. Then, there had been duck-shooting in the *Cheri Tank*, school sports, garden party, dinner party, dancing and music by famous performers.

It was indeed a mirthful week for the people of Bobbili, which they observed in reverence for their Ruler. A fine account of the whole celebrations we find in beautiful description in *Telugu* verse in a book titled *Bobbili Pattabhishekamulu* by Poet Venkata Sastri.



### CHAPTER III

## ROAD TO RESPONSIBILITY

After Gandhi had stirred up the masses of India, with his *Non-Co-operation* agitation since 1920, politics took a new turn in the country. It was till then a preserve of the few, lawyers and the learned, and of aristocrats. Now, beginning with the third decade of the present century, almost every one seemed to have plunged into politics in India, since the Congress wanted one and all to agitate against British Rule, to get Independence.

As far as Bobbili Rulers were concerned, the Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao had been in politics. His son Raja Venkata Krishna was also in the Legislative Council, and the Vizagpatnam District Board as President. Now, Raja Ramakrishna Ranga Rao also followed in their footsteps, taking some interest in the country's political affairs.

In 1926, he was nominated by the *Land-Holders* of the South to a membership of the *Council of State* in New Delhi. He was then hardly twenty five years of age. But, he did not very much like to be there for long. The council of *Elders*, as some people referred to that legislative body,

did not interest him at all, and he seemed to be feeling that the "proceedings of the House were dull and life-less". As a *Realist* in all what he said and did, the Raja then took the only course he could. He resigned.

The next three years he was somewhat aloof from active politics. Nevertheless, the country's problems drew his keen attention and he carefully studied books and newspapers. It looked as though he was equipping himself for any possible part he would be called upon to play in the future, by his fellow-countrymen. Then, the Madras general elections of 1930 came, and the Raja was prevailed upon by friends and fellow land-holders to jump into the fray, and he could not resist responding to their request.

When he walked into the election ring to contest from the Vizagapatam Constituency, he had to face a politician of some importance in Mr. C. V. S. Narasimha Razu. But then, he was in no way more popular with the people than the Raja. That was evident when he secured 36,000 votes as against Razu's 8000. At the polls, people walked in freely and said only one name to the Officer in charge, the *Raja*. He, of course, represented the *Justice Party* while Razu was a *Nationalist*. The Raja could have had an unanimous election



to the Legislative Council if he wanted, through the limited Land-holders' constituency in Madras, but he preferred to be a representative elected by the people of his own District. His wish was so fulfilled.

### *Delegate to R. T. C.*

Now, in 1930, the *Simon Commission* on Indian reforms had come and gone, submitting a report to the British Government on possible reforms for India. Subsequently, the British Government called for a Round Table Conference in London, and it was held between November 12, 1930 and January 19, 1931. The Conference was composed of British Representatives and Indian delegates.

A second Round Table conference was proposed to be held in the *Autumn* of 1931 and it lasted till December that year. Gandhi went to that conference as the sole Representative of the Indian National Congress after his agreement with the then Viceroy Lord Irwin. To that conference the Raja of Bobbili was invited as a representative of the Indian *Land Holders*. Responding, the Raja sailed for England and he was then, perhaps, the *Youngest Indian Delegate* to this important Conference, since he was only thirty years of age!

Taking up his residence in the *Savoy*

*Hotel*, the Raja took a very keen interest in the proceedings of the Conference. He addressed it during the *Plenary Session* in November. He prefaced his speech by saying that he hoped the Conference would give its best consideration to the problems of the *Land-holders* of India. As far as he was concerned, he said, he wished to deal in his speech with such subjects as *Franchise*, *Minorities*, *Representations in the Provincial Constitution*, and the *Federal Structure Committee Report* in their aspects as affecting the interests of the Land holders. He pointed out that though the *Zamindars* had a large stake in the country, they had no "desire to arrest progress or to thwart the legislative ambitions of their countrymen." The *Zamindars* needed special representation in the Provincial and Central legislatures, and the need for it was more now, than ever. The Raja preferred bi-cameral legislatures, since they had a "steadying influence on the occasional impestousity of the Popular Chamber."

The Raja, then, went on to point out that some of the *Zamindaris* were bigger than Princely-ruled States, and quoted some of the proclamations of Lord Cornwallis in 1793 on behalf of the *East India Company*, assuring certain rights and privileges to the *Zamindari* classes. *Jumma*



was fixed for ever; the *Zamindars* were also assured by His Lordship that "their heirs and lawful successors will be allowed to hold their estates at such assessment for ever." The Raja put forward that there should be no variations now on such assessments fixed already, and which they were "respectfully engaged to pay."

The Raja went on to explain further. In a *Charter* granted to the Madras Landholders, the following assurances were given, he said.

"The British Government resolve to grant to the *Zamindars* and their land holders, their heirs and successors a permanent proprietary to their land in all times to come; to fix for ever a moderate assessment of revenue which shall never liable to change under any circumstances. Courts of Judicature will protect these valuable rights."

These obligations should be carried on in the *New Constitution*, pleaded the Raja. The new Government of India should be bound by these obligations entered into by the old. Meanwhile, the *Zamindars* heard with alarm talk in some quarters that titles to their property would be subject to examination and audit by the new Government, not according to any well defined law, but on account of a mysterious process which recognized only

that which is legitimate and in the best interests of the nation.

He went on to say that "to mix up moral ideas with legal ideas would result in doing injustice both to moral conceptions and legal ideas." When the British *Crown* took over the Company's undertakings in 1858, a firm promise was given to the *Zamindars* about the Company's bindings. In 1919, the Government of India re-affirmed the same.

Now, on the question of legislature representation, the Raja said that his Justice Party wanted special representations for Europeans, Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians, and that he regretted there were voices opposing such just claims. The Raja concluded by saying that *Provincial Autonomy* and *All-India Federation* should be established at the same time.

He apologized to the House for his long speech, in consonance with his good manners, and thanked the Conference for the opportunity given him to voice his views.

The Raja also presented to the Conference three *Memorandums*. The most important one was on the position of Land holders in India the Raja prepared along with Sir Kameshwar Singh, Maharaja of Dharbanga. Another was on the import-



ance of instituting *Second Chambers* in the legislative frame work, and the third was on the question of taking steps to form a separate *Andhra Province*.

Besides attending the Conference, the Raja had a busy time in London. He attended such functions as the King's Garden Party at the *Buckingham Palace* on November 5, a lecture on the *Non-Brahmin Movement* by the late Sir A. P. Patro before the *East India Association*, the Lord Mayor's show, a *Diwali* reception by Sir Purushothamadas Takur-das, a special exhibition of Indian art by Laurence Binyon, and a Royal Opera House performance at the *Covent Garden*.

The whole time the Raja was in London, he utilized his time in studies, meeting important British Statesmen and creating a very favourable impression about himself to all those who came in contact with him. He came rather close to the then Secretary of State the late Sir Samuel Hoare (Lord Templewood), also with R. A. Butler, then Under Secretary of State for India. As the Raja left on his homeward voyage after the Conference, he wrote a formal letter from Nice to Sir Samuel, thanking him for the courtesy shewn him. The reply he had for it showed in what high regard Sam Hoare held the Raja.

Writing on December 15, 1931, Hoare said that he was most anxious to keep in touch with the Raja and to "hear from you from time to time." He added: "I take this opportunity of assuring you of the pleasure I have derived from our acquaintance, and of the interest which I shall continue to take in the affairs of those whom you represent."

These were important lines which clearly established what a fine impression the Raja, at such a young age gave a tried British Statesman in Sam Hoare with whom he had a series of letter-exchanges in subsequent months.

### *Moves in Madras Politics*

The Raja who was a Member of the Madras Legislative Council, when he got back from England, saw the new Justice Ministry under Mr. C. Muniswamy Naidu functioning in a rather hotch-potch way. But he, a man who would not rush up to any action without forethought, tolerated the strange working of the Ministry for a time. He preferred to watch and wait.

When the *General elections* came in 1930, the Raja gave money for Party Funds. He had also confidence in the leadership of Muniswamy Naidu who was elected Party *Leader* at the Justice Party Conference in



Nellore in 1929. At the general election time, Naidu appeared to have given an assurance that he would take atleast one *Zamindar* in his Ministry, but he went off his words, subsequently. The Raja was no aspirant for a place in the Ministry, it should be clearly pointed out here. The Raja of Venkatagiri and Mr. Muthia Chettiar of Chettinad, however, wanted to get in. Vexed, Muthia Chettiar appeared to have gone into forming a *ginger-group* amongst the Justicites, once Naidu did not take in a land-holder. He chose for his ministerial colleagues Sir P. T. Rajan and the late Sir Kumaraswamy Reddiar, a native of Tinnavelly.

Muniswamy Naidu was a weak type of politician, a *Khamma Naidu* by caste. He was alleged to have sided a *Khamma-Zamindar*, when he tried to introduce a bill relating to the *Inamdars* (minor land-holders), soon after taking office, thereby exhibiting favouritism to a fellow caste-man ! Therefore, there had been growing resentment in the Justice Party about the ways of Naidu, the leader.

In the summer of 1932, the *Madras Mail* one day published an interview said to have been given to it at Ooty by a very important leader of the Justice Party, expressing discontent against the Naidu-Ministry. The leader's name was not,

however given out, and it was said later on, the person was none else than the Raja of Bobbili! When the interview was published, the *Justice*, the official organ of the Justice Party, then edited by Sir A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar criticised the anonymous leader and the substance of his interview. There was also a letter to the Editor of the *Madras Mail* by a writer who wrote under the pen-name of *Searchlight*, and it was said that he was none other than the late P. Balasubramonia Mudaliar, a staunch Justice Party worker and later, editor of a weekly paper called the *Sunday Observer*. However, these publications gave the indication that a silent move was, however, being made against Muniswamy Naidu's Ministry. Some secret campaigns were also launched against Naidu to drive him out of office, but all such attempts seemed to have failed in the initial stages.

Then, it was decided by some Party-men to hold a fresh Confederation at Tanjore. It was fixed for October 10 and 11, and the Raja of Bobbili was chosen to preside over it. The Raja travelled by a special train to Tanjore for the purpose.

Now, the *Khamma Naidus* of the *Andhra* region had their clanish feelings whipped up to the highest pitch. They all viewed that they should, by all means, stand by



Naidu. Their leaders who had money, took to Tanjore hundreds of men who were not actually Partymen! Their only object was to create confusion in the Conference and break it. Such a stormy situation had been described by K. M. Balasubramoniam, a *Chronicler* of those days present at the gathering in the following words. Wrote he :

“The pandemonium and scene that ensued and marred its proceedings recalled the *Surat Imbroglio*. Furniture were thrown in fierce hatred, shoes were hurled out with shrieks and imprecations and mud and stones were strewn with maniacal fury and wrath, the Confederation became a bear-garden of confusion. Behind this sound and smoke, around these clouds and thunder was being effected a revolution which placed Bobbili on the throne.”

All these disturbances were initiated by the *Khammas* attending the Confederation with their sub-communal spirit to keep Muniswamy Naidu continued in Party leadership.

When the Confederation was about to commence, a messenger ran upto the Raja and told him not to go to the venue of the gathering. “They are unruly and might injure you”, the messenger warned.

The Raja's big eyes blazed like a tiger's! His face turned all the more

serious and he bit his lips a little. Then he was brief in what he said ;

“ I have in me the blood of a *Rajput*. it is not for me to retreat the step I take forward ”.

So saying, he got into the waiting automobile and drove away to the Conference. Amidst shouts and shrieks, he after taking the chair, stood up to deliver his presidential speech, but the great confusion prevented him from doing so. The gathering then broke off in a medley.

The speech, which the Raja had in his hand, printed ofcourse, was a masterly survey of the then political situation in India, with special reference to the policies of the Justice Party.

The speech commenced with a tribute to the dead Partymen who were “ examples to be emulated ”. The Justice Party stood for political and social justice, seeking constitutional advance as per the policy chartered out by former leaders of the Party. The Raja also in that speech touched on the *All-India* problems arising from the constitutional changes envisaged and welcomed a Federal Government as acceptable, to continue Indo-British amity. *Provincial Autonomy* without a responsible central government



was unacceptable to his Party. On the *Communal Award* question, he felt that "It was a humiliating spectacle for us in London that we who had gone so far from our country, were unable to come to a working compromise". In 1919, Non-Brahmins wanted Communal electorate, but after ten years, suggested its withdrawal.

About the *Depresses Classes*, the Raja had mentioned: "We claim that we were the earliest and almost the only political party in India that put the problem as one of the main planks of the political work in the country and in the legislatures".

The Raja declared that he was also for supporting the *Buy-Indian Movement*, then showing up its head in South India, but in that, "there can't be any hatred of others".

Further he gave out his views on the *Communal G.O.* which he said was necessary, pleaded for introduction of free elementary education, better sanitation and medical facilities for the people and for giving occupancy rights of land to agricultural classes.

Speaking about the Party itself he said that "we represent truly and singularly the maxim *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* and that it should fight forces of destruction and

disorder for the sake of Constitutional progress. The Justice Party, he emphasised, was the one party which claimed in its rank rich, poor, labourer, landlord, tenent and capitalist, each sacrificing something for the larger interests of the cause", and therefore, his confidence in the future of the Party was great. Then, he ended that speech with a spiritual touch in its last lines.

“ May He keep us to a right understanding of our duties and may He succour us in our troubles and tribulations, thus stretching forth His hand of divine benediction, to lead us into the promised land.”

That is the speech he should have delivered at the Tanjore Confederation, but the unruly *Khamas* who had come to the Confederation to create discord and prevent the Raja from future leadership of the Party as against their clansman Naidu, marred its delivery. Nevertheless, there was widespread appreciation of the manner in which the Raja's speech was composed in a statesman like manner, with judicious observations on questions at issue, of those days.

Ramaswamy Mudaliar was not present at the Tanjore Confederation, he having gone to England on important political work connected with the Round Table



Conference. The *Justice*, soon after the Tanjore meeting, referred to Muniswamy Naidu as *ex-leader* of the Party! The editor at that time was the gifted journalist T. A. V. Nathan, who wrote convincingly and whose articles in defence of his Party's ideals were much appreciated. In spite of what the paper wrote, Muniswamy Naidu constitutionally continued to be the Chief Minister. When friends asked the Raja of Bobbili what had to be done next, his brief reply was characteristic of the selfless soul he ever was. "If the Party does not want a change in leadership, neither do I want it."

Then, the Raja was told that it would not be right to leave the fight mid-way, by his getting away to England for the Third Session of the Round Table Conference for which he had already been invited. He thought over the matter. Whether he carried on the fight or not, he knew he had loyal supporters, and to leave them in the lurch would not be decent behaviour on his part. So, he decided to stay on in India itself and watch how the political tide was turning in the affairs of his Party.

Once again, a new move was made. It was to get a *No-Confidence* motion passed against Muniswamy Naidu in the legislative council. Sir Mahomed Usman who was a Partyman himself, seemed to

support the move. Still, there was only a bleak prospect of a *No-Confidence* motion succeeding at that time. Naidu had equal number of supporters as his adversaries in the legislature. Then, his ministerial colleagues P. T. Rajan and Kumaraswamy Reddy themselves turned against him! Rajan, after meeting Naidu and embracing him with tears in his eyes, told him that he had resigned his ministership! Kumaraswamy Reddy quietly wrote out his parting-chit without the least fuss. Then, poor Naidu had no other alternative than himself offering to resign. He doubted his own strength, and he suspected that a motion of No-Confidence against him would, perhaps, succeed. There, he was utterly wrong. Anyhow, he resigned. If he did not, it was problematical whether there was any chance for a ministerial change at that time! However, his opponents seemed to be more fortunate.

Governor Sir George Stanley promptly accepted the resignation of Muniswamy Naidu whom he did not like at all, because he always thought that his Chief Minister was a *stooge* of the Congress Party, then carrying on destructive tactics to paralyse the British regime in the country.

Once Naidu resigned the Chief Ministership, it was the name of P. T. Rajan some folk proposed to step



into his shoes, and the Raja himself supported that move. But, there were stronger and younger elements in the Justice Party which wanted to have the pride of an youngman as the Chief, the Raja being fit for it, though he was then only just *Thirty-one*! However, the Party finally fixed up the choice on the Raja, and he was called upon by the Governor to form the Ministry on November 5, 1932. Ofcourse, P. T. Rajan and Kumaraswamy Reddy became his Ministerial colleagues. The Raja took up the subjects of *Local self Government, Village Panchayats, Medical Administration, Public Health, Sanitation, Vital Statistics, Religious and Charitable Endowments, Light Railways and trams, Stores and Stationery* in his portfolio.

A few days after he assumed office as Chief Minister of Madras, the Raja explained the events leading to it in a fairly long letter he wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India in England. Since his own version of affairs have a significant tone, the narrative is worth perusing. Wrote he:

“ The Chief Minister of Madras, whose resignation has been brought about, and whose place I have now taken, is one Mr. B. Muniswami Naidu. He belonged to the Justice Party. But it would appear that from the very commencement of his political career he has entertained, although

he has belonged to the Justice Party, a sneaking affection for the Congress and the *Swarajists*. Two and half years ago when we elected him as the *Leader* of the Party in the Madras Council and lent him our support to be the Chief Minister, not one of us was aware of this tendency in him. But gradually, as month passed after month, his bias in favour of the *Swarajists* became more and more open. He was in charge of the *Local Self Government* portfolio, and he therefore had a lot to do with the elections and nominations to the Local Boards and District Boards. He began to show open favouritism to the *Swarajist* candidates in preference to the candidates of the Justice Party which had put him into power. I and my friends could not tolerate this behaviour especially because the strength of our Party at the forthcoming General Elections, where in all probability the Congress too would be greatly impired if the Local and District Boards were to pass out of our hands into those of the *Swarajists*. As you may be aware, the two Districts of Kistna and Guntur, which are situated in the northern portions of the Madras Presidency, have been the hot-bed of *Swarajist* influence. In these Districts it was my special endeavour to strengthen and securely lay the true foundations for our Party. In these above mentioned two Districts and elsewhere too, Mr. Muniswami Naidu gave me any amount of trouble.

The graphic letter went on :

“I patiently put up with all that and very often appealed to his better sense that



he should play the game by the Party which had put him into power. All my appeals ended in nothing. The Chief Minister, drunk with a false security of his position, became openly defiant. My Partymen noticed all this and they came up to me and said the time for for-bearance was well-nigh past, and that the Party should pull him down. With this end in view they elected me as the President of the Non-Brahmin Confederation which met on the 10th and 11th of October at Tanjore. At this Confederation, Mr. Muniswami Naidu and his *Swarajist* supporters managed to bring there about six hundred rowdy elements and through them created disturbance at the meeting of the Confederation. When our Partymen witnessed this exhibition, they were determined that at all costs, Mr. Muniswami Naidu should be forced to resign from the Ministry.

The letter concluded :

“ Because I felt that in retaining Mr. Muniswami Naidu in power the Justice Party would only be playing into the hands of the *Swarajists*, I considered it my first charge to pull aside Mr. Naidu and thereby re-affirm both the credentials and the security of the Justice Party. When by the third November it became abundantly clear to Mr. Naidu that he no longer retained the confidence of the Party and that it would be extremely risky for him to continue in office any longer, he decided to resign.

Mr. R. A. Butler, whose friendship the Raja had, written then, congratulating the new Chief Minister of Madras.

“I am personally very glad to see that a friend of mine had received this appointment and that it had fallen to one who belong to the younger generation.”

Butler himself was twenty-nine when he wrote that letter. No wonder, he drew pointed attention to the Raja's youth.

Butler also added referring to the Raja's inability to attend the Third Round Table Conference. “You will be very much missed both by myself and your other friends here.”



## CHAPTER IV

### CHIEF MINISTER

If the Raja took office, it is only because he was persuaded by a preponderant majority of his Partymen to it. When responsibility was thrust on him, he was no person to shierk it, or take it easy. He just put on himself the *Crown of Thorns* with a simple smile. If ruling men was a special gift of his, it was in his very blood. His life force, then, seemed to have been influenced by ancestors, than vitamins.

He had been administering his own State of Bobbili with commendable success for eleven years when the task of playing a decisive part in the Government of Madras was put into his hands in the role of Chief Minister. He had given Bobbili improvement in education, improved child welfare schemes, built a hospital for women and children, introduced handicrafts to those who wanted to work, extended the Co-operative Movement, gave scholarships to students who wanted technical education, brought in electricity, constructed parks, encouraged youngmen who preferred *Sanscrit* studies, gave handsome contributions to the Andhra University as well as to Tagore's *Shantineketan*.

For what all he did, the people of Bobbili felt very grateful to him.

To rule over a small State was one thing, but to shoulder the burden of the office of Chief Minister of a big *Presidency* like Madras, and that at the age of *thirty one* was different, we know. With him, age seemed to be no factor at all! He displayed bursts of energy. If William Pitt was Prime Minister of England at the age of twenty five from 1784 for seventeen years, this young Indian at thirty one was not any the less capable as an Administrator. He had purity of private life and passion for public service in abundance. To him, *Politics was not an instrument of power, but a path of selfless service*. His ambition to serve people ran in torrents.

The Raja assumed office on *Guy Fawkes'* day, and what a day was it! If that were in any way an index of what was coming, he certainly did see much political fireworks whilst in office. After taking his seat in the *Secretariat Building* in *Fort St. George*, he looked at the mountain of *files* on his office table with wondering eyes. He calmly sat there and began tackling them one after another, read, re-read and wrote his remarks in the margins. He warmed up to his work so seriously that day itself that he went ahead with the *files* at a stretch for many



hours. By dinner time, he found himself in a fit of fever, the whole body being affected by rising temperature. He was, then, forced to bed for the next two days.

Punctually by eleven of the clock he attended office everyday, and worked till lunch time. Then, he got back home, ate his meal, slept a little, sometimes attended evening parties, and sat with *files* again after dinner till it was zero hour. "If Abraham Lincoln had a happy day, in twenty years, I never knew it", remarked Herndon, his law partner. Even so, if the Raja had a restful day in the four years he was Chief Minister, those who were close to him never knew there was such a day!

Having made *reform* his sole career, he planned everything first. He studied the needs of the people of Madras and thought over what legislations had to be tackled for their immediate benefit. His head was full of ideas, which as they came to him, he jotted down on paper, studied them well, and moved for action.

While his taking office was widely applauded by all those who had considered matters with a constitutional sense in Madras, the powerful *Nationalist Press* was anti-Ministerial. To begin with, the Raja forming the Ministry was disapproved by the newspaper *Hindu* in an

editorial, but there was nothing surprising about it. The paper had written caustically even when the Raja's grand-father the Maharaja Sir Venkata Ranga Rao became the first Indian Executive Councillor in Madras in 1910. When his son Raja Kumar Krishna Venkata Ranga Rao was nominated to the Madras Legislative Council in 1916, the paper criticized, though a famous Madras leader at that time, Mr. V. Krishnaswamy Aiyer, warmly congratulated the Raja.

The Raja's political opponents, the Congressmen, went on issuing torrential press statements every day in critical tones. The Brahmins who said that the Justice Party was against them, with communal hatred, they forming the widely intelligent class of people in public affairs in the South, began talking in season and out of season that the new Ministry was a deplorable development. In fact, the talk of Madras in those days was that the affairs of the Province under a *Raja*, a blue-blooded aristocrat, were going towards disaster. This was sheer misleading political propaganda by those who never cared to know the real Raja of Bobbili, his head or heart, or the nobility of his ideals and purity of his personal character. An Observer of the situation, at that time, had recorded as follows :



“ Though the most discussed man, the Raja of Bobbili is the least popular public man. One in a thousand could have seen him and one in a million could have spoken to him. Everything the country knows about him is *hearsay*. The reputation of Bobbili was severely left alone at the sweet mercy of two-penny papers. He is and was to the public what they picture him to be. The funniest of those caricatures that filled those penny papers stick into the parchments of the simple man in the street. He was to the public an unknown quantity of abominable politics. There grew up soon the legend of the Raja of Bobbili the myth as distinct from the Raja of Bobbili the man. It was this Bobbili of popular myth that swayed the minds of the public and served as food for scandals. Anything was believed about him; nothing was too harsh or unjust. *Ravana* and *Nero* were the commonest comparisons which the Congress Pymns and Hampdons colourfully caricatured him. And, the story loving simple minds devoured these silly fables and wondered at his depravity! He was very much like the Asquith of war time, the object of monstrous fables. Abuse of the Raja Saheb's name perused in the buses, in the trains and trams, on the platforms and pials.”

But, why all these? No one knows! To judge without understanding had been a widespread folly of South Indian politics althrough. But of all that, the least mind-

ing person was the Raja himself. He was not the man to be moved by the Press criticism and planned gossips, as he had set his ideals of public service high and persued them with the vigour of his youth and enthusiasm. With his adversaries, the one simple consideration seemed to be

*I don't like thee Dr. Fell  
The reason why I cannot tell  
But this alone, I know full well  
I do not love thee Dr. Fell !*

### ***Legislations***

Now, one of the most important legislative measures the Raja undertook was the Amendment to the *Estates Land Act*. When Muniswamy Naidu, his predecessor was in office, he faced opposition for it and then, he vacillated. Now, with the courage of his convictions, the Raja tackled the question. He said that this measure was necessary in order to remove some of the difficulties found in the working of the *Land Act* of 1908. He wanted it to be discussed by a Select Committee, also through a joint conference of representatives of *Zamindars* and tenants. He a *Zamindar* himself, was moving in the first instance, to do justice to the ryots, and some talked about it as though the wolf shed tears for the lamb !



The Raja prevailed upon the Revenue Member of the Madras Cabinet Sir A. Y. G. Campbell to introduce a *Bill*, and it was brought before the legislature even within four months of the Raja taking office. When it was discussed in the council for the first time, a legislator asked the Raja :

“Why don't you give up your *Zamindari*?”

Prompt was the reply.

“Yes, when everybody gives up, I shall. It will go, don't you worry.”

The Revenue Member Campbell explained the scope of the *Bill*. He stopped it earlier, he said, because some members appealed to the Government to postpone the measure and so he acceded. The *Bill* had the full support of the former Chief Minister Muniswamy Naidu, he said.

The Raja, making a statement on the subject, gave a convincing explanation on the floor of the Legislative Council in August 1933. Among other things he said :

“I am sure it will be recognized that the main principle and the object underlying the *Estates Land Act* is to safeguard the rights of the cultivating tenants. In working, occupancy rights had been passing into the hands of middlemen whose only interest in land is to extract highly

possible rent and the cultivating tenants are being reduced to the position of serfs."

"With the help of God", he said, he hoped to have an agreeable solution to the problem from both the *Zamindars* and *ryots*. After heated discussions, the *Estates Land Act* was passed by the Government during the *Budget* session of 1934, the Governor giving assent to it on May 2 of the same year.

Now another courageous measure the Government yet introduced in the legislature was the *Inams Bill* whose discussions in the legislature led to controversies, but that too, was finally passed. Some legislators raised the canard that the measure affected mostly Brahmins, because the *Inamdars* in large numbers were only Brahmins and therefore, the Chief Minister had communal motives in sponsoring the *Bill*! The Raja said that the measure affected both the Brahmins and Non-Brahmins alike who were *Inamdars*. Then, it was said that *Inamdars* were not represented in the legislature. Even to this, the Raja gave an apt reply. There were 25 to 30 *Inamdars* who were in the Council, and they seemed to have generally supported the Government with regard to this *Bill*.

In November 1933, when the *Inams Bill* was under discussion in the Council the



Raja made a brilliant statement, explaining this new legislation.

“ One third of the Presidency was in the hands of *Zamindars* and one third of it in the hands of major and minor *Inamdars*. In 5000 *Inam* villages, there were five million cultivators. By this *Bill*, the Government sought to ensure the happiness of the cultivators of the land who were then in a state of serfdom and slavery. The cultivating tenent had inherent rights of property in the land, subject to his paying reasonable rent. If the *Inamdars* had bought and sold the interests of the tenent in the land, they had been dealing with properties to which they had no rights, and it was no good for any criticism at this stage to say that this *Amendment* to the *Inams Bill* was in the nature of confiscatory legislation. On the other-hand, it sought to give what was due to the tenent and asking *Inamdars* to give up the rights of their tenents which they have expropriated themselves.”

Then, the Raja quoted reason and precedent in the matter. In the *Inams Act* of 1869 it was clearly defined that the rights of holders or occupants of land should not be destroyed by anything that was not in the *Inamdar's* title-deed. Alike, the *Madras Enfranchisement Act* of 1862 also said that the *Inamdar* had “no right to the land he did not otherwise possess.” The *Madras Rent Receiving Act* of 1865 also plainly

put it that the rights of *Zamindars* and *Inamdars* should be treated alike.

The Rajah said that there was no question of awarding compensation to the *Inamdars* affected by the *Bill*, because the measure was in no sense leading to any expropriation. Since the existing law was inadequate to prevent encroachment by *Inamdars* of the rights of tenants in law, the present *Amendment* had to be introduced. If timely action was not taken by the government, agrarian unrest would sweep the Presidency, the Raja pointed out.

Revenue Member Sir A. Y. G. Campbell said that beyond the clear statement of the Raja who had admirably put the Government point of view, he himself had nothing to add.

The next day, when the legislative discussion of the *Bill* commenced, Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliar, a veteran legislator, made a speech in which he applauded the measure sponsored by the Raja. While congratulating the Chief Minister for his speech on the *Bill*, the previous day, what was spoken was marked by "sobriety of judgement, close reasoning and dignity which some of us at least would like to imitate", Mudaliar said.



Rose up then Labour-leader legislator in the Madras Council to speak in high terms of the Raja's wisdom with regard to the *Inams Bill*. Mr. Basu Dev said that it was a happy sign that the landed aristocracy led by the Raja of Bobbili should have readily accepted certain concessions to the tenants and re-affirmed sympathy to promote their interests.

Mr. Hameed Khan, a Moslem legislator thought that the Raja of Bobbili, as a very skillful leader of the Justice Party, had used his skill very successfully to side-track the issue and make himself the real champion of the ryots !

Munuswamy Naidu, though happy at the *Bill*, in a vindictive way, chose to pay a tribute to the Revenue Member Campbell, instead of to the Raja, for its successful passage !

The net result of the *Bill*, the Raja pointed out, was in benefitting 5 million *Inam* tenants and enfranchising one million of them.

Public opinion against this *Bill* was stirred up by vested interests that even a man of usually sober views like the late Sir. M. Ramachandra Rao, led a deputation in protest to the Viceroy, in June 1935!. With all that, the Viceroy gave his assent to the *Bill* on October 30, 1935, after it had

been passed by the Madras Legislative Council.

Commenting on the Raja's stand with regard to the *Inams Bill*, the *Mail* editorially made an interesting observation. It wrote :

“ When the Raja of Bobbili attacks the Communistic and Socialistic doctrines of the President of the Congress Party (Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru) and at the same time claims the *Inams Bill* as an outstanding achievement of his own Party, he fails to carry conviction. For, the *Inams Bill* is in the true *Communist* tradition.”

The *Mail* was althrough against the Justic Ministry under the Raja, and when some one asked him in 1936 whether the paper was an organ of the *Madras European Association*, he gave out that he was authoritatively told that it was not. “ I understand that it represents the views of none other than its editor ”, the Raja explained.

Besides the *Inams Bill*, there was one to amend the *Local Boards Act*, and this was viewed with concern by the Justice Partymen themselves. The bill provided for the appointment of Commissioners to the Municipalities, just to relieve the Chairmen of the tedium of Executive work. But, most Chairmen of Municipalities being Justicites, mistakenly thought that their powers were being curbed.



Then, he put out an Act to foster up *Elementary Education* in the Presidency. On this question, the Raja said that he could not speak much on education in other countries with intimate knowledge, but he knew that no country attained universal literacy without some form of compulsion.

When the Raja wanted legislation to abolish Taluq Boards, even for that, he found opposition from some quarters. He explained neatly :

“Of the 120 Taluq Boards in the Presidency, 46 could not balance budgets. Likewise, 12 out of the 25 District Boards had their finances always in defecit.”

But the Raja had his own way. The Bill to abolish the Boards were passed in March 1934, even Mr. C. Rajagopalachari approving the measure with acclamation.

The *Madras Impartible Estates Act*, the *Amendment to the Entertainments Act*, the *Public Health Act* by which Health Officers were appointed to District Boards and Municipalities, the *Agriculturists' Loan Act*, the *Malabar Tenancy Act*, all were introduced during his Chief Ministership and passed.

There was lively work in the legislature in those days and it is evident

from the fact that during the *Budget* session of the year 1934, the Speaker Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddy gave out that he dealt with as many as 1711 questions by legislators. Of them 880 were answered, 14 withdrawn, 169 disallowed, and 48 referred back to the legislators who sent in the questions.

Two significant things which happened that year were worth noting. Sir Mahomed Usman, then Home Member and a strong Justicite, acted as Governor of Madras as Sir George Stanley, the Governor, went to Delhi to act as Viceroy in place of Lord Willingdon. It was for the first time an Indian had been honoured that way in Madras. Also that year, in the Madras Corporation elections, the Justicites came out triumphantly, establishing the truth that the citizens were behind the Ministerial Party, in the main.

### *Andhra Province*

Soon after the Raja took office, his *Andhra* friends began pressing him to move in the direction of getting a separate Province for them. He who had vehemently pleaded for it in a *Memorandum* submitted to the Round Table Conference session he attended, had a feeling in 1933 that the problem might await solution for some



time. In a Press interview at Ooty, he gave out his views frankly on June 26, 1933.

Said the Raja, that he did not want the Madras Presidency just then to be split into *pocket-boroughs* as in England. Madras was influential with New Delhi because of its vast size, and a division would lose that importance. Bombay and Bengal would then move up. It was not easy to create a new Province and meet the financial obligations freshly arising. *Andhras* could pay no more taxes for the sake of a new Province, especially at a time like that, when an economic depression swept the world and India.

The Raja recalled how the British Government refused to re-draw the map of India in response to a Memorandum submitted by Sir M. Ramachandra Rao earlier, on the same question. The Raja added:

“If it is to serve my own personal interest, I would have certainly chosen to swim with the tide. But in the interests of every one, I have to take a different position now.”

Critics of the Raja said that because he was then Chief Minister, he wanted to be so, of a bigger Province! “Why should he have now changed views since he got to power?” asked the Congress newspaper

*Swarajya*. "Not opportune to press the demand now", said his own Party paper the *Justice*. Yet another Nationalist newspaper in *Indian Express* wrote that the Raja's "arguments are sound about the financial implications and boundary disputes."

The Raja knew full well that it was no time for the British Government to do anything in the matter of *Andhra* Province, and we know, that even after *Independence*, the *Andhras* had to wait for six years to realize their long cherished dream.

When Harischandrudu, a legislator wanted to bring into the Legislative Council the *Andhra* Province separation question, the Raja gave a statement which was full of weighty arguments. He traced the history of such a demand.

In the Madras Legislative Council a resolution was passed in March 1927. Forty voted for it, 32 against and whilst 6 remained neutral. Of them, 17 members were *Telugus*. Five *Telugus* opposed. The 6 neutrals were also *Telugus*. In the Simon Commission Report and at the Round Table Conference sessions, the same demand was taken up. A Memorandum was presented to the Conference by the Raja himself and Mr. V. V. Giri, the labour leader of those times. A deputation also



went to Lord Lothian, Under-Secretary for State for India. There were other moves for linguistic separation like Agra to be taken off from Oudh, Maharashtra separated from Gujerat, a separate *Kanada* Province asked for by B. Shiva Rao, also the Punjab wanting Ambala separated. For all these, the British Government refused to re-draw the lines on the Indian map, he pointed out.

When there was a demand from Legislators that the Raja had better reduce land revenue, he said that the matter was a *reserved subject*, which only the Executive Councillors could handle.

He introduced a *Bill* to improve the Thirumalai-Thirupathi Temple Administration. When he and the Finance Member of the Cabinet Sir Houghton Stokes once visited Thirupathi, a local Brahmin leader at a public meeting described the Chief Minister as "the chosen one of God to introduce this *Bill*."

*Harijans* were appointed to the Temple Administration Committees in various parts of the Presidency, which showed that the Raja recognized no caste restrictions amongst the *Hindus*. He also appointed District Panchayat Officers.

### *Amity with Governors*

The Raja maintained cordial relations with Sir George Stanley, the Governor of Madras, when he first came into office. When the Madras Cabinet gave a dinner on November 1, 1934 to Sir George on the eve of his departure from India, the Raja wearing his little laced velvet cap and dark coat was present. He paid tributes to the Governor.

He referred to the greatness of the *House of Derbys* in England from which Sir George hailed, and said: "To us, he is not only His Majesty's Representative in Madras, but a personal friend whose mature advice had been of the highest help." The Raja also paid a tribute to Lady Stanley who stepped up the Presidency's social service activities.

Sir George, as he replied, returned a handsome compliment to his Chief Minister. Said he:

"The Raja by his ability has shewn that he is pre-eminently fitted to hold the position of Chief Minister. I hope he will continue to do more useful work in future too."

With Sir George's successor in office Lord Erskine also, the Raja maintained the best of relations. His Lordship once said in the Legislative Council that



“Madras gave the lead to the rest of India in working democratic institutions.” Mr. Satyamurthy, a Congress Party member of the legislature then told the Governor, such a tribute to Madras was a *political lie* and challenged Erskine to face an election in Madras with such a statement!

### *Memorandums*

The Raja's friendly relations with the Governors apart, he differed with the I. C. S. Officers of British nationality serving the Government of Madras at that time, on several occasions. An Important fight he had then with the European Officers was on the question of an appointment of a new Sanitary Engineer to Government, for which a vacancy arose in 1931.

Mr. Greg, Chief Engineer wanted to appoint a European for the place. Mr. A. V. Raman, a Brahmin, was another candidate. The Government, after the Raja had taken office, appointed Mr. G. V. Rao, a Non-Brahmin. Raman protested, often writing letters to higher officers quoting Omar Khayyam in his official correspondence, showing out his bookish knowledge which he somewhat had. Raman also rebelled against his Chief G. V. Rao by writing him certain insolent letters. The

Government found Raman an unruly subordinate and after a through inquiry, suspended him from service.

In this affair, Swaminatha Iyer (Engineer) Mr. N. Gopalaswami Iyengar (Secretary, P. W. D. Department), Mr. Vipani, Mr. Harvey and Mr. Barber all were against G. V. Rao. The gifted Deputy Secretary of the Local Administration Department then, the late Mr. S. G. Sengodayan, I. C. S., backed up Rao in all fairness and condemned Raman. The Chief Minister under whom Sengodayan directly served in his department thoroughly agreed with him and said, "Mr. Sengodayan is above personal prejudice and in the discharge of his official duty, his impartiality is remarkable."

A very weighty *Memorandum* was prepared by the Raja on this *Raman-affair* with the gifts of a *King's Counsel*. It is a masterpiece in draftsmanship, only those who had read it would understand. His logic and arguments, his rare capacity to marshal facts as they were, his ability to press his points of view, all were seen in a tactful way in that document.

The effect of such a valuable *Memorandum* the Raja prepared clearly dealing with the case, was readily appreciated by the Governor Stanley, who ordered suspen-



sion of Raman. Mr. Hall, I. C. S. also eventually agreed with the Governor's decision. The Raja in his *Memorandum* finally suggested censure on Raman. He wrote :

“ If His Excellency wants to show mercy on Raman, make him an Assistant Engineer and transfer him to the Public Works Department.”

He did not want him any more in the Local Self-Government Section, because he considered Raman not the proper type of a Government servant under him.

In the *Memorandum* the Raja also told the Governor :

“ My only excuse in this is my desire to do my duty to my entire satisfaction, to do full justice to the subject.”

Another of the Raja's masterly *Memorandums* to Government was on the subject of limiting import of Burma rice into Madras. On this, he even proposed to go on a deputation to the Viceroy in New Delhi.

In it, he clearly pointed out how paddy cultivation had the first place in the agriculture of India, and how during 1932-33, 802 lakhs of acres in this country remained under paddy cultivation. In other words, we had then, forty per cent

of arable land under food crop cultivation.

The Raja wanted protection given to Indian rice, by levying a duty on Burma rice. Preference amongst imported rice might be given to Burma rice than to any other country, he viewed. The matter needed investigation by the *Tariff Board*, he pleaded.

In 1934, the Raja had been chosen *Pro-Chancellor* of the Andhra University, a seat of education for which his family and himself had done a lot.

Another tussle the Raja had in office was with the Surgeon-General to Government, a Britisher. With him he differed in 1933 in the matter of giving study-leave to certain doctors in the Madras Provincial Service.

The Surgeon-General had his own choices and it appeared that he wanted to favour some Civil Assistant Surgeons of his selection, but the Raja had his administrative difficulties in the allotment of finance for it, and so, he had his own views in the matter. When he was considering this question, he neatly capped a quotation from the book *A Nation in the Making*, the autobiography of the late Sir Surendranath Banerjee, in which the eminent *Bengali*



who was a Minister had said, *how to get on with a Surgeon-General!* Banerjee viewed that the Englishman after getting a few hard knocks, came to his sense of reason and that is what happened with a Surgeon-General who was in Bengal services under Banerjee. The Raja had an aptitude to justify his stand, drawing parallels from books and documents he studied with the earnestness of a lawyer. About the difference he had with his Surgeon-General, the Raja wrote to Mr. Conran Smith, the Governor's Private Secretary, in June 1933 :

“ I am for the principle, and am not at all interested in any individual.”

### *Tours and Speeches*

A Chief Minister in Madras has to put up with manifold responsibilities in various spheres of activity. He has not only to do his work in the Secretariat by planning reforms, legislations, look after the draft of bills and deal with files, but also go about often to the various centres of the Presidency to keep in touch with the people through conferences and public meetings, explaining what the Ministry is doing. These days, after the advent of our Political Freedom, the Congress Ministers seem to be touring and speaking to people on more days in a year than

working in the *Secretariat*, whilst their Secretaries do most of the file-job and advise on legislations. It was the other way about when the Raja was Chief Minister.

Still, he occasionally went on tours when his presence in some part of the Presidency was felt essential. And, Ministerial tours were a dignified affair in those days than they are today, viewed from several angles.

The Raja was not an orator at all, when he entered office. Just a few days before he became Chief Minister, he seemed unsteady on a platform where he had to speak. "On the eve of the Tanjore Confederation, when he performed the function of unveiling a portrait of the Raja of Panagal at Trichy, he was on his legs for the first time as a public speaker and politician in South India. He fumbled and faltered and murmured his typed script speech in a melancholy and inaudible tone and shaking with shyness and nervousness, he dared not look at the audience", said a report. But, within a few months, he proved to be a unique master of public speaking. He could deliver extempore speeches even for two hours without the least fatigue, his *English* so clear, his arguments shattering, his *repartee* superb to opponents.



So, we saw him occasionally attending public conferences convened by his Party folk and speaking in a brilliant and convincing way. *Addresses* of welcome for him were given in hundreds, praising his work and worth as a leader of the people. While replying to them, he judiciously referred to his political opponents, never resorting to the language of *Billingsgate* as did Congressmen, quite often.

At Thiruvannamalai in August 1934 he told an audience :

“It was said that Congressmen only could be true Indians, they alone can speak for the country. If India has demonstrated to the world that we can manage our affairs, with pardonable pride I say, it is to a large extent, due to the successful working of the reforms by the Justice Party.”

Who dare question such an assertion? Was he not on realistic grounds when he said that? Yet, his political adversaries would not agree with him !

In the same month, when the Justice Party Conference met in the *Victoria Public Hall*, Madras, Sir Mahomed Usman proposing the Raja to the Chair paid him a tribute by observing that the Raja had “the qualities of Statesmanship, tactfulness and ability combined with sterling character.”

The Raja, speaking from the Chair on the occasion for two full hours, made a very able survey of the political situation of those times. Giving out his views on the record of the Justice Party in the affairs of the country, he said that the creed of the Party was "Political and social justice." It always stood for such an ideal under Sir P. T. Chetty, Dr. T. M. Nair, and the Raja of Panagal, all of them then dead, the very men who nurtured the early fortunes of the Party.

Then of *Caste* tyrannies, he said: "If our country is to reach the cherished goal, the whole structure of our caste-system must go completely."

Affirming his faith in the future of his Party, he gave out that "our Motherland will rise phoenix-like from the ashes of her ancient glory and occupy her proper place in the Commonwealth of the British Empire for the good of humanity and for the peace, prosperity and contentment of her own children."

It was a realistic speech. Even ten years after *Independence* had come to us, we are within the British Commonwealth as the Raja prophetically said in 1934. We are high up too as a nation now.

Another big Conference of the Justice Party he addressed was at Virudunagar in



March 1935. The Raja said there, that Congress newspapers wrote that the Justice Party was perpetuating communal representation in services and public bodies, but then, the Party's main plank of programme was, finding the unity amongst communities by safeguarding the interests of each. "Social organization alone could bring about a fusion of all communities", he said.

The *Hindu* had written that people condemned his communal administration, but the Raja thought that the intention of the Congress was to perpetuate age old caste-domination and caste tyrannies under the guise of nationalism.

Wasn't the Raja *realistic* here again? Did not Nehru say as late as in 1959 that the new *Swatantra Party* which had originated in the South, did not like our country to change in a progressive manner and that the Party wanted to maintain standards of olden days? Well, the leader of the Congress Party then was C. Rajagopalacharya who is now the leader of the *Swatantra Party*, preaching conservative ideals.

The Raja told the Virudunagar Conference that he and the Congress differed on what was true nationalism. What did they hear in those days of

Congress work except collection of funds in the name of poor *Harijans*?

Rajagopalacharya had stated that the Justicites prevented *Temple Entry* by the *Harijans*, the Raja said, amidst the laughter of his audience.

The Congressmen told the Central Government that the mind of caste Hindus was not fully prepared for the change, and therefore, the *Temple Entry* legislation should be dropped. Anticipating that the Congress would be blamed for such an attitude, Rajagopalacharya, then threw the blame on the Justice Party! This was one of the many "mischievous representations" to the people, the Raja pointed out.

Since 1920, the Justice Party served the *Harijans* with schools, scholarships, co-operative societies, grants to schools, provision of burning ghats, and land-on-lease for cultivation.

The Raja added :

"What Congress proposes to do now, we did since 1920"

Rajagopalacharya again told the people that a crore of rupees the Government of India gave in 1934 for village amenities in Madras, the Justice Ministry proposed to use "through subservient local bodies for political jobbery."!



Such a contention, said the Raja, was an “insult to our self-governing institutions.”

At a meeting of the Party in Tanjore in August 1935 the Raja told his men that they had done “all that is possible” in office.

In October that year, he told a Party Conference at Guntur that the “achievements of his Government are not *spectacular to the Theorist*, but they are solid in *character and of practical utility*”.

Critics might campaign with mispresentations unlimited all the same, but what were to be done for that?—he asked.

The Raja was not at all saying a word more in the claims that he made, since even a Congress newspaper published from Calcutta made a correct appraisal of the way the Madras Government worked on at that time. Wrote the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* in April 1935 :

“ The Government of Madras is not only the most solvent of the Provincial Governments, but is also very energetic in regard to carrying out a vigorous programme of nation-building work.”

Yet, in another speech in Madras in October 1936 the Raja explained the stand of the Congress, as he viewed it. It was:

“ In consistency of the Congress consists in the fact that it supports a

constructive programme with a destructive policy. How can Satyamurthy take office and wreck the Government?"

At Uravakonda (Andhra) he told an audience in November 1936 that the *Tungabadra* Project was delayed, not because of the Madras Government. He also added in the course of a speech on the same occasion :

"The Justice Party is not directed against any particular community but it stands for political and social justice, opportunities to all."

Hundreds of speeches he had been delivering, putting before the people of the Madras Presidency his views, that of his Government and Party, from time to time. Yet, his adversaries in the political field had their powerful newspapers and platform speakers to twist facts and carry on a campaign against the Raja's Ministry. All because, he was an aristocrat, a Justicite and one who believed in working a constitutional programme for the good of the people, and did not believe in fantastic visions to achieve certain objectives by wrecking the Constitution or working on to drive away the British, who were firmly entrenched on our soil in the 1930s and who could not be shaken at all from their seat of Ruling Power.



Many significant things happened during the four years the Raja was Chief Minister of Madras. On June 3, 1935 he was knighted by the British Government with the distinction of *K.C.I.E.* and the Party paper *Justice* remarked about it while congratulating, that the news was "not at all surprising." In June 1936, the *Silver Jubilee* of accession to the Throne of King George V was celebrated in Madras, which had also then a new Governor in Lord Erskine, who arrived on November 15, 1935 as successor to Sir George Stanley.

The Raja although tried to maintain cordial relations with his Party folk and the Public, he was in no sense a *mass-leader* as Congress leaders were at that time. He was not easily accesible for an interview, it was given out. There was some truth in it. It was not possible at all for him to grant interviews to one and all who called to see him. An interview with a Minister in Madras in those days and even now, is for asking favours. But the Raja was not shunning callers on that account. He was all for awarding favours that he possibly could. The fact was, he had to work so hard in so many other fields, that he could not find the time to receive all those who wanted to see him.

One day, he agreed to receive ten

people and he did. When the callers had left, he found himself committed to give several thousands of rupees for various causes, since the *Raja* would never give a negative reply to any one who approached him with requests, and he always saw to it that he fulfilled his word. That was the big headache he had in those days in the matter of awarding interviews. It was said that the famous film actress Mary Pickford had ten times the demand of her earnings for charities from the people! The case of the *Raja* was no different, but it was not humanly possible for any man to face such big demands. Therefore, at times, he rather preferred to reluctantly deny an interview, rather than committing himself to do the impossible!

### ***Assembly Elections (1934)***

In the Autumn of 1934, a general election was held to choose representatives to the Central Legislative Assembly in New Delhi. In Madras, two great men of the Justice Party got into the field for the contest. One was Sir A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar and the other was Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetty. They were men of great reputation in political life, with a good record of public service. Shanmukham Chetty was then *Speaker* of the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi.



Ramaswamy Mudaliar had been a staunch Justicite since the very inception of the Party, had attended many international conferences and was considered an able writer and public speaker. He contested a seat from the City of Madras. To him, no less a person than Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru sent a telegraphic message wishing him success. "Every good wish for your success. I don't know who your opponent is, I cannot even recall who he is!" The opponent was a Congress politician of those days, S. Satyamurthy, who devotedly served his Party for long as a *trumpet-boy*, but died of broken heart that he was not given even a Minister's place when the Congress under C. Rajagopalacharya formed a Ministry in 1937. The *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* of Calcutta while supporting the candidature of Ramaswamy Mudaliar wrote of him: "Though we don't see eye to eye with Ramaswamy Mudaliar's politics, we have respect for his great abilities." With such a candidate representing the Party, the Raja gave all support.

Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetty was a candidate for the *Commerce Constituency* of South India, where there was only a limited franchise. He was opposed by Sami Venkatachalam Chetty for the Congress, though in politics he was

nowhere near the big reputation his opponent had.

The contest was keen. The powerful newspapers of Madras supported Satyamurthy and Sami Vekatachalam Chetty. The election speeches of the Justicites rarely found publication in the Congress-owned influential newspapers of Madras, while several columns were given to the speeches of even some obscure four anna members of the Congress !

However, when the election took place on November 10 and the results were declared the following day, Ramaswamy Mudaliar and Shanmukham Chetty had been defeated ! In the North, even men of outstanding merit like Pt. Kunzru in U.P. and the merchant-prince Walchand Hirachand in Bombay were also floored by their Congress adversaries. The Madras Congress cry that *voting for Sathyamurthy meant winning Swaraj* and *voting for Ramaswamy Mudaliar meant choosing slavery*, seemed to have worked havoc with the innocent people ! Rajendra Prasad who was then Congress President, had his own view about Congressmen winning elections. He had given out that "Swaraj couldn't be achieved by anything that Congressmen did in the legislatures". Still, Congressmen thought of winning *Swaraj* by entering the councils.



In Madras, the shame of it all was, the preponderant majority of City votes of the Non-Brahmins, whose representative was Ramaswamy Mudaliar, were to decide the election. He greatly banked on that factor for his victory. But then, the average *Non-Brahmin* in Madras only talked glibly about affairs; he was never a fellow with his eyes fixed on practical advantages for himself or his fellow-men! He really had no communal feelings of which he was generally accused by the Brahmin. Even today, the Non-Brahmin in South India is generally a poor specimen of humanity, never knowing anything worth while in reality, of life or living. The Brahmin with his wide education, is any day a superior human being in many ways, and the top-most ones amongst them like Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer or Mr. S. Anantharamakrishnan, the biggest industrialist of South India today, are truly choice flowers of humanity. No wonder, the so-called Non-Brahmins who formed the bulk of City voters, let down a very distinguished man of their fold and great sympathy went for Ramaswamy Mudaliar.

The Raja had spent much money for his Party's candidates to see victory, and when their defeat was announced, he was sad. Writing about the election defeat, the *Justice*, the Party organ of the Justicities

quoted a poem as to how truth never triumphed anywhere in the modern world, particularly in that Assembly election.

*Truth was on the scaffold  
Wrong for ever on the Throne  
Yet the scaffold sways the future  
And behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shaded  
Keeping watch above His cram*

The City's papers controlled by Congressmen were jubilant. The *Hindu* came out with a big poster when the election results were announced, heralding the defeat of Shanmukham Chetty. "The Assembly President unseated," the poster gave out. The *Hindu* also wrote that the verdict in the election showed the people's condemnation of communal administration, but the paper never said who was running the communal administration? The reference was, of course, to the Justice Party, in spite of the Raja, the Chief Minister, saying time and again, that his administration was not at all based on any communal outlook. Neither had he at any time or place spoken scathingly or surly of the *Brahmin* in any of his speeches. For, he is a *great gentleman* who could never be petty or mean. When his political enemies found nothing to say against his administration, they for a



policy, had to say something, and so they said it was *communal*! In Malabar, they have it that when one had no argument, he resorted to making faces!

Just ten years ago, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer in a parlour conversation gave out:

“We talked of the communalism of the Justice Party in the old days, but that was nothing compared to what it is today, in the Congress Rule in Madras!”

A writer calling himself *Constitutionalist*, soon after the elections wrote to the *Hindu* saying that as the Justices were floored in the Assembly elections, the Madras Ministry should be dissolved! It appears that Lord Balfour, as Premier, had once resigned when he saw some reverses in bye-elections in England. What a comparison! Ramaswamy Mudaliar gave apt answers for such suggestions, writing in the *Justice* of which he was the distinguished editor then, quoting the famous maxim of Burke that, “we learnt wisdom through humiliation.”

Ofcourse, with all the cooing and billing of the *Nationalist Press* and the shouts of penny-politicians of the Congress, the Raja's ministerial caravan still marched ahead, working its way to do what best could be done for the people and

much had been indeed done, inspite of Congress fulminations.

After the elections, Shanmukham Chetty became *Dewan* of Cochin and Ramaswamy Mudaliar got a Membership on the *Tariff Commission*.

### *Factions in the Party*

A few months after the Raja became Chief Minister, rumours were set afloat by his political opponents that the Justice Party was working with divisions in its fold. In June 1933, the Raja had to clarify such a mischievous rumour. "We are working in harmony and co-operation with each other," he said. Still, another rumour that was made current was about the alleged disloyalty of P. T. Rajan towards his Chief in the Ministry. That Rajan had his certain differences with the Raja it could not be denied, even so the other fellow-member Kumarasamy Reddy. Rajan sometimes, gave vent to his inner feelings in secret to some of his close associates. For instance, the Trichy Municipal Chairman Thevar was supported by Rajan, whilst the Chief Minister superseded his Municipality. There were other rumours too. However, P. T. Rajan issued a statement to the Press on September 12, 1933 contradicting such rumours. It was said the he and Sir



A. T. Pannirselvam were making violent attacks against the Raja, but Rajan said, it was all incorrect.

On the other hand, he expressed gratitude to the Raja for having gone to the rescue of the Justice Party at a very critical time. He went on saying: "I would be the last person to associate myself with any meeting or organization to condemn the Chief Minister."

The Raja, ever forgiving and always gracious even towards his bitter opponents, never took any serious notice of such allegations that were brought to his notice.

Now, shortly after the general election to the Central Legislative Assembly in November 1934, the defeat of Shanmukham Chetty caused such a big surprise to every one. It was said that he relied much for his victory on Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar, but allegations were finally made that he betrayed that trust by handing over some of the votes in his possession to favour the Congress candidate! Truth or not, the allegation was persistent. Therefore, the Justice Party wanted to move a *No-confidence* motion on Annamalai Chettiar's son Muthia Chettiar who was *Chief Whip* of the Party in the Madras Legislative Council.

The Raja, as Chief Minister, hesitated at first to comply with the *No-confidence* motion, since he felt that there was no tangible proof in the matter. Moreover, his relations with Annamalai Chettiar as well as Muthia Chettiar were always cordial. He, therefore, wondered how they could go against the Party?

Way back in 1933, in the month of March, Annamalai Chettiar gave a dinner to the Raja, and proposing the toast of the chief guest, had spoken in very eulogistic terms. He said in the course of a long speech :

“ The Raja of Bobbili is the youngest Chief Minister in India and he brings with him a name for efficient administration of one of the biggest estates.....As Chief Minister, he has important portfolios and youth bears the burden successfully. Given time and good will, the Raja of Bobbili will show up a bright record of service to his credit and earn the rewards of such service, opportunities for more and better service in higher spheres. The supreme satisfaction of having done his best will be his, and what more a conscientious worker desire ?”

In the same vein, the younger *Chettinad* (Muthia Chettiar) also tributed the Raja while unveiling at Thirupathi the Chief Minister's portrait in September 1933, also at a reception in Trichy earlier, in the



month of July. "Bobbili had been rendering yeoman service to the Party", he said.

Now, how could Annamali Chettiar and Muthia Chettiar who had such feelings of admiration for the Raja betray his interests in the Party, he wondered. But the Raja was told by his Partymen :

"If you don't take action against Muthia, the *Chief Whip*, that means you are shielding a moneyed-man."

On the face of such a threat, the Raja agreed to allow the Party to do what it wanted. A meeting for the *Non-Confidence* motion was fixed for December 11, 1934. But the Raja received as many as 400 telegrams from different parts of the Madras Presidency asking him not to go ahead with the move! Who sent these telegrams, there was no knowing, but they did reach the Raja. Counter telegrams were sent to important partymen to attend and to ignore the rumour set afloat that there would not be any meeting on December 11.

Then, on that date as many as fifty-two leaders of the Justice Party assembled in *Branson Baugh*, the residence of the Raja in Mount Road, Madras.

The actual resolution of *No-confidence* was dictated by R. K. Shanmukham Chetty himself, and was taken down by Ramaswamy Mudaliar.

Before the resolution was moved, Muthia Chettiar who was present told his partymen that he was'nt feeling anxious to continue as *Whip* when confidence on him ceased. If the general well-being of the Party required his quitting, he was willing. He learnt about the matter first only from the newspapers on December 4, he said.

Muthia Chettiar, at any rate, did not like a Political Party turning rather *personal* towards him. When an American newspaper once printed the *Ten Comandments*, an irritated subscriber stopped the paper telling the Editor he was getting too *personal* !

The Raja, on this occasion said that he should not be misunderstood as entering a controversy regarding the *Assembly Elections*. At the same time, he felt compelled to say that Muthia Chettiar's account of what happened at a meeting between himself and Annamali Chettiar, as given out by Muthia Chettiar was not correct. The Raja said, that he only expressed his profound disappointment at the support that was received from the



Chettinad area, a disappointment which he was quite sure was also shared by Shanmukham Chetty.

The Raja said that while reading a letter of Shanmukham Chetty at that meeting, Muthia Chettiar had not read all the portions of it! Amongst other things, Shanmukham Chetty appeared to have written to Annamalai Chettiar :

“Considering what the defeat in the election has meant to me and my career, you will agree with me that my disappointment must indeed be very great.”

This portion of the letter was brought to the notice of the meeting by the Raja.

The Raja of Venkatagiri who moved the resolution of *No-confidence* observed that Muthia's continuance in the Party was undesirable.

A. P. Patro then got upon his feet and accused the Raja of Bobbili for re-nominating Muthia Chettiar a second time for the Madras Mayoralty, just five months ago. “Is it not a great sacrifice the Party has made by supporting him in preference to senior members of the Party?”, Patro asked.

Though nothing could be proved, and it was difficult to prove, the results of the elections and circumstances attending on

them pointed out to certain conclusions, Patro gave out. More, the Law Secretaries in the Government had to do the *Whip's* job, at times, and that Muthia Chettiar's work in the Council was most unsatisfactory.

The Raja, then, made a statement in which he said that he associated himself with the motion purely in the interests of the Party, though his friendship for Muthia Chettiar was as cordial as ever. Said the Raja :

“ For sometime, I have received that the working of the *Chief Whip* was not satisfactory. It is now the general wish of Members of the Party that there should be a change. I am placed in the responsible position of the Leader of the Party and you know, all my resources are at the disposal of the Party. Needless to say that there is no personal quarrel between me and the Kumārārāja Muthia Chettiar. Reference has been made about the Corporation re-nomination. It is true that I went out of my way in this and I take the fullest responsibility for it. It was nothing adverse in the interests of the Party. After the elections, I cannot say whether my action was in the interests of betterment of the Party. Now, in the interests of the Party, the change is necessary and I commend the motion.”

Muthia Chettiar's resignation was accepted at the Party meeting.



As far as the Raja's part in this muddy affair which was not much to the credit of the Justice Party, he was only actuated by Party interests and well might we think of him in this along the sharp lines of W. S. Gilbert which ran :

*I always voted at my Party's call,  
And never thought of thinking for myself at all !*

Political wounds are sooner healed than knife-cuts in South India, especially if the quarrels had been between rich men. Soon, Shanmukham Chetty was seen closely allied to Annamalai Chettiar and he, after being India's First Finance Minister in 1947, even went to the amazing extent of accepting a Vice-chancellorship in the *Annamalai University*, just before he died in May, 1953 ! On the other hand, Ramaswamy Mudaliar admirably enough stuck to his guns, never to have anything to do with the *Chettiars*-Father or Son !

### ***No-confidence in Ministry !***

No-confidence motions against the Party in power were regular features in the Madras Legislative Council, after the *Montford* reforms given in 1920. Whether they had chances of success or not, the movers never worried themselves. All of them, ofcourse, failed. The Raja of

Bobbili as Chief Minister, had once to face it too,

Dr. P. Subbarayan, a Salem *Zamindar*, who started his political career in Madras as a *Justicite* and soon changed over as an *Independent*, was in 1932 a *Congressman*, and he functioned in the Madras Legislative Council as leader of the Opposition. He chose to move a No-confidence motion against the Ministry on March 14, 1935. His text was: "The Ministers have lost the confidence of the House."

He characterized the Justy Party as a demoralized one, and quoted for his authority the Central legislature election defeats of the Party the previous year as a complete debacle. He confessed that he was not moving the motion on the persuasion of any disgruntled Justicite at all! Demoralization had set into the Party since sacking Muniswamy Naidu from leadership, he said. The very next day Naidu left as Chief Minister, Subbarayan said, he wanted to move the No-confidence motion, but could not then get the 42 members as required by the rules to support him! The Council was also adjourned soon after.

Intervening, the Home Member Sir A. T. Pannirselvam asked whether the Council did not meet several times, since then?



There was no answer for that !

Subbarayan went on saying that he held no brief for Muthia Chettiar who was bundled out by the Ministerialist Party from the position of *Chief Whip*. The Ministry bifurcated the Tanjore District Board to serve Party interests. Then, Subbarayan confessed :

“ If I have any faith in the Ministry, it is really in the Hon’ble gentleman, the Chief Minister.”

When the motion came up before the Legislative Council, Mr. W. K. M. Langley, an active European non-official legislator shouted “ Money, money ”, as the root cause of this motion. Langley, of course, knew the inside facts, though Subbarayan’s hands, it should be made clear, were clean.

When Raman Menon, another legislator, challenged Langley for his accusation by asking whether Mr. Scott Brown, (official) did not influence nominated members not to vote for the motion, Langley vehemently asked back whether Menon could honestly say that no opposition member was influenced by gratifications received ?

Menon supported and seconded the Motion.

Yahaya Ali, another legislator said that according to Parliamentary Government in England, a No-confidence motion was open to serious objection if entertained for mere Party purpose, a right which should be strongly exercised.

Todd, another European, said that no person had a right to bring forward a No-confidence resolution unless he was prepared to assure responsibility for placing the Government in the minority.

T. C. Srinivasa Iyengar, another critic of the Government yet suggested that the Ministry had as well seek a vote of confidence. He seemed to think of *French standards* in Madras !

Rao Saheb Sivaraj, the *Harijan* legislator said that during the many years he had been in the Council, he never felt so deplorable as on that day about the speech of Subbarayan, the Opposition leader !

Daniel Thomas said that the duty of the Opposition seemed to be merely to oppose ; so he found at what was being done. Madras had a great reputation for forming stable Governments, even as the Raja had done.

Langley said that the Opposition made no case for the motion at all ! A man who



read the classics, he quoted the instance of the *fat boy* in *Pickwick Papers* who threatened the old lady to make her flesh creep! The *Non-confidence* motion was somewhat that, he said. But here, the Ministers merely smiled at it, since they well knew its ultimate fate.

After more speeches rose Muthia Chettiar, former *Whip* of the Justice Party for whom Subbarayan expressed no sympathy.

Muthia Chettiar said that he had no idea of intervening in the debate or to widen the gulf of the Justice Party for which he affirmed a soft corner at heart. He complained that though he was loyal to the Party, on what justifiable grounds and in what desparate haste was a No-confidence motion moved against him? He was, therefore, wondering whether it was possible for him to work with those gentlemen who dealt with him so badly. Muthia concluded by saying:

“I am coming to realize that if any one is to take part in politics, he should not be a richman”.

Muthia need hardly have lamented for himself being *rich*! If he were not a richman, he would have had no place in the politics of South India at all! Was it his meritorious political record or wide

scholarship that made him the *Mayor* of Madras twice, and later a Minister in this State? It was nothing but his money-power that earned for him a place in the public life of Madras, every one knew. Still, his complaint that no richman should take part in politics, is a platitude which is hardly acceptable. There had been richmen who did play a worthy part in South India's politics.

Mr. Ranganatha Mudaliar, a veteran legislator and former Ministerial colleague of Subbarayan was no doubt trenchant as he explained himself what his views were on the motion before the House.

“ I vote against it because I have hopes of the Chief Minister acquitting himself well. He is a youngman and a man with brains. God has given him money. The emoluments of a Minister is no attraction to him. He can lead an honourable life elsewhere. His name should not be dragged to the mire as Chief Minister.”

After so many speeches, the Raja (Chief Minister) got upon his legs to reply to the Debate. He said he had little to say after heavy speeches in the House delivered. The Opposition leader had said that he did not care how the vote would go! “ If on motions of this kind, any indication is to be found, it is only on the voting of them”, said the Raja.



Regarding nominations to the East Tanjore District Board, Subbarayan was merely flogging a dead horse, said the Raja, who went on further to say that he opposed the motion.

Subbarayan then made an ineffective reply to the debate, and as it was 5 p.m. then, the *House* went on to take the vote. The result was, *forty-two* voted for the motion and *eighty* against it!

Muniswamy Naidu, the Raja's predecessor in office, wreaked vengeance by voting against the motion, of which he was no doubt happy at heart, as he explained himself to close friends.

Many years after this motion had been voted down, Subbarayan gave out some of the facts behind this episode. He said that Muthia Chettiar did not ask him to move the motion. "He might have gone to others for support, I don't know."

On the otherhand, the former Justice Party *Whip* asked Subbarayan not to move the motion at the very last hour, perhaps, with the premonition that it would be defeated. "No, if I don't, I would be misunderstood" the Mover replied to Muthia Chettiar.

There were too many gossips in Madras at that time, about Muthia Chettiar's precise part in this No-confidence

motion matter, but a writer recording history can pay no heed to them, like a judge who is supposed not to know anything that was not precisely presented before him in Court, while dealing with a case. An illustration of this is, perhaps, pardonable here.

Long ago, when Lord Darling the great Judge was considering a case in London, the name of Sir George Robey, the all too popular Comedian in England at that time, was casually mentioned by a Counsel. His Lordship immediately raising his eyebrows asked who Robey was, exhibiting judicial ignorance, whereupon the Counsel wittily gave the reply that the Comedian was the "darling of the Stage!"

Subbarayan confessed in a vein of affection: "Bobbili is my good friend." An Oxford educated man like him could have hardly over-looked the great virtues, genuine passion for public service and the exemplary personal conduct in everything done on the part of the Raja, who was sacrificing his time and money for a noble cause, the cause of serving the people to the best of his ability.

The Raja was versatile, and he as Party leader, early realized the importance of a newspaper for his Party. The *Justice* (daily newspaper) started along with the



Party in 1917, had never been a financial success, since business considerations were never thought of in the first instance, in publishing it. The Party also ran a *Tamil* daily-paper by name *Dravidan*. The first editor of the *Justice* was the Party-Founder Dr. T. M. Nair himself, who wrote brilliant editorials breathing humour, sarcasam and sensible substance. From 1925 to 1929 the publications appeared to have been run on a loss of monthly 2 to 3 thousands, and they were met from the special collections made by Partymen to the tune of Rs. 65,000. The Secretary of the Party in a communication to the people, stated in January 1933 that "since the inclusion of the Hon'ble the Raja of Bobbili on the Board of Directorate, he has tried to help the *Justice* by very liberal donations." The truth of the whole matter is, the Raja month after month, passed on his pay-cheque of Rs. 5,000 and over straight away to the *Justice* Management, something which no Party leader had ever done before.

In January 1933, the paper's name was changed from *Justice* to *New Times* and when that was done, messages of goodwill were sent by famous men like Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer. The great Philosopher had telegraphed that "the paper would stand

for nationalism in the true sense," and it really did.

The *New Times* was also edited by Ramaswamy Mudaliar, as he edited the *Justice*, and it was quite an interesting publication. Its importance, of course, lay in the editorials which Ramaswamy Mudaliar wrote. After ten months, the *New Times* once again changed over to its original name *Justice*, which continued publication till the next general elections were over in 1936.

Even before the elections came, Editor Ramaswamy Mudaliar had left for England. In fact, his connection with the paper ceased with his appointment to the *Tariff Board* in 1935. In June the following year, he was appointed a Member of the *India Council* in London. He was, then, the first *Tamil Non-Bramin* chosen for the position, and the other South Indians who held the place before him being Sir C. Sankaran Nair in 1920 and Sir P. Rajagopalachari in 1924.

In 1935, another important Partyman in A. T. Pannirselvam was appointed Home Member to the Government. In all these, the Raja had a decisive part to play, and he played it so well.

The Raja who had taken office and served Madras with the devotion of a



Priest adoring his *Gospel*, was nevertheless worried a lot about things shaping not according to his plans within the Party, and in the Government administration. But he spoke nothing about it all to any, not even to any confidential friend, if he had any. With him, it was that *his heart might quake at times, but he never let another know about it!* Such a hero was he! However, four years of brain work and travels had now somewhat affected his health, and he decided to leave for England for a change, for a while. So, resigning his office temporarily, he left Madras on April 4, 1936.

When he was in England, Lord Erskine, the Governor also went on home-leave, leaving Sir K. V. Reddy to act as Governor in the summer months.

The Raja returned from England in August with better health for himself and the Rani. He then gave an interview to the newspaper *Justice*, in the course of which he said that he was back with his Partymen "with renewed vigour to fight the battle of the Party and the country."

He went on to say that since his last visit to England in 1931 for the Round Table Conference, things had settled there for the better. Trade was on the up-grade. He could not say the same of other

countries in Europe. Wherever he went, he met with hospitality. The Labour Party was more interested in India than other political groups in Britain, and the *man in the street* in England knew very little about our country, unless anything occurred here very seriously.

When his attention was drawn to the Maharaja of Pithapur having started a new Party to fight the forth-coming elections, the Raja declined to comment, but casually said that "if they were to have large number of parties, no Government would be stable," as we saw it in later years in that wonder-State *Kerala*.

As regards the Raja having contacts with the people, there was not much of it. He did not attend each and every evening party or dinner. Ofcourse, he had his careful choice of them, and when he went, he mostly dressed himself in a dark long coat, tight trousers and adorned his head with that laced velvet cap in purple. He also carried a walking stick with him. In some of the group photographs taken and published in the Press, we saw him mostly *standing* in a very modest way though he was Chief Minister of the State! Yes, as Sir M. Krishnan Nair remarked of him, the Raja was "a born aristocrat, but by temperment, a great democrat".

Like a bolt from the blue, the Raja



early in October 1936, received the resignation of his Ministerial colleague Kumaraswamy Reddy. The resignation was due to his bad health, it was reported, which the *Justice* commented as "an explanation popular in high places this year"! Reddy was already over sixty when he became a Minister but any way, his sudden parting from the Ministry was resented by the Governor Erskine. He told the Raja to persuade him to continue, but the ailing Minister had decided to quit for good and wouldn't reconsider his decision.

The Raja who was then not in the City arrived here suddenly, stayed in his special railway *saloon* itself, sent for Annamalai Chettiar and his son Muthiah Chettiar and met them. Then on October 10, a Government *Gazette* announced the appointment of Muthiah Chettiar to Reddy's place as Minister.

It appears that because of the forthcoming elections Sir Mahomed Usman felt there should be no cleavage in the Justice Party and therefore, powerful monied interests like the *Chettinad* leaders had to be conciliated. That apart, many Justicites said that it was not at all in the good interests of the Party, which the Raja also realized as truth when neither Annamalai Chettiar nor Muthia Chettiar

did anything tangible for the Party during the general elections that ensued. On the otherhand, some others said that it was a "stroke of statesmanship" on the part of the Raja to have roped in Muthia Chettiar into the Ministry. He held office for a few months, received a *Knighthood* and had nothing to do with the Justice Party in the later years. The highest reward for an Indian politician in those days, as it is even today, is a Ministership, and Muthia Chettiar having got it, his interest in politics itself seemed to wane somewhat, though he continued to be a legislator even afterwards with a Congress Party label attached to him !



## CHAPTER V

### ELECTIONS (1936)

Governor Stanley after adjourning the Legislative Council on March 24, 1934 gave it an extension for a year. Similarly, Governor Erskine too announced the life of the legislature to go upto November 1936.

From the beginning of August itself, the chief political parties seemed to have embarked on organizational work for the elections. The main parties were *Congress* and the *Justicites*. In between had come yet a small third party, calling itself the *People's Party*, which the Maharaja of Pithapur announced.

The Raja of Bobbili had not only taken great responsibility to run the elections, but to tour different places, to address meetings and conferences. Besides, he had to give financial help to many of his party candidates. It was all great strain for a young aristocrat given to take things easy in his youth and who now in his early thirties, was straining every nerve of his to discharge the responsibilities of a unique Party leadership. The Raja might have

then even felt like Poetess Helen Hooper that

*I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty  
I woke and found that life was Duty*

So vast was his responsibility during the closing months of 1936 with regard to the elections, he had many a sleepless night. He received little or no assistance from any one in the Party itself, assistance that really mattered. All the more, his troubles were manifold. Still, he the brave man, faced his tasks with his usual enthusiasm in any situation.

The Justice Party's *Election Manifesto* was drafted and issued. On September 20, the Raja at Bezawada announced it in a huge public meeting. He had brought to his side the Raja of Chellapalli and the Raja of Mirzapur for the sake of common cause, and they too were in that meeting.

The Raja speaking on the occasion told his hearers about the successful working by the Justice Party of the *Montford Constitution*. The Party also improved the lot of the rural folk by bettering *medical, sanitary, water supply, marketting facilities* and gave the people enhanced standards in agriculture.

Various legislations such as the *Agriculturists' Loan Act, Hindu Religious*



*Endowments Act*, increased grants for elementary education, cottage industries and irrigational aids were given. The *Depressed Classes* were stepped up through ways possible, and the *Inams Bill* benefitted a very large number of people.

For the future, the Justice Party had in mind a *Ten Year Plan* to introduce compulsory elementary education with night-schools established. More water for villages, ware-houses for grain storage, cheap electricity for helping rural small-scale industries, indianization of services more and more, better wages for workers, and increased salaries for Government servants, all were envisaged in the Party Programme.

And, the Raja said, that his Party stood for full *Dominion Status* within the British Empire, which ideal has been kept up by the Congress Government ruling the country today, though *Independence* had been declared in 1947. What the Raja meant was Indo-British collaboration when he thought of *Dominion status* and happily enough, Mr. Nehru, our Prime Minister, by deciding to remain within the *Commonwealth* seems to have identical views with the Raja.

Then, he told his audience of impractical suggestions contained in the

*Congress Election Manifesto*. It was good Congressmen realized that the only wise thing to do was to enter the Councils, after indulging in fruitless policies such as *Civil Disobedience* and *Non-Co-operation* with the British. Gandhi himself left the Congress in disgust when *Civil Disobedience* failed. Congressmen could not wreck the Constitution or paralyse the administration. All they could do was to obstruct social and political progress in the country, the Raja pointed out.

Regarding the uplift of the *Depressed Classes*, the Raja sounded a note of explanation.

“It is only long after we had been in the field that Mahatma Gandhi had come out with his programme for the *Harijans*.”

Who could deny that assertion? It was as plain as day break, but the Congressmen had to twist solid facts to shreds, for the sake of propaganda in their politics.

A number of other places in the Madras Presidency were also visited by the Raja lecturing, for the sake of telling people his Party's policies. His purse-strings were opened to pay out the big amount of *three lakhs of rupees* to support a hundred *Justicite* candidates in the election.

Annamalai Chettiar and his son Muthia Chettiar with whom the Raja compromised



earlier for the sake of winning their support for the Party, were nowhere in the scene when the election campaign was in full swing. They parted with no cash for the Party's election fund either! Important Justicite leaders went on asking the question: "where are the *Chettinad* friends"? They were not even in the city of Madras then, the Raja was reliably assured.

### *People's Party*

Now, a fresh adversary to the Justice Party was the Maharaja of Pithapur who had announced a new Party. He had earlier approached the Raja of Bobbili with a fantastic suggestion. It was that the Raja should take Pithapur before Lord Erskine and say that if the Justicites won the 1936 elections, he would be called upon to form the Ministry as Chief Minister! How could any sensible man accede to such a proposal? The Raja, ofcourse, declined to do anything of the sort, and the Maharaja was hurt at heart.

Pithapur appeared to have taken counsel about his project to start the *Peoples Party* with such men as Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, and T. R. Venkatarama Sastri (eminent lawyers) who were pro-Congress at heart. They thought that by the rise of a new Party, the troubles of the Justicites

whom they hated, would be increased. So, they backed up the Maharaja.

There was, then, Sir K. V. Reddy, who had his personal grouse against the Raja of Bobbili for declining to nominate Reddy's widowed sister to a membership of the East Godavari District Board. Reddy becoming the *Law Member* of the Madras Government also, Bobbili resented, since he had to back up a more deserving man in Ramaswamy Mudaliar. A. P. Patro who went about in the open as a staunch Justicite, in secret sided with Pithapur's Party. The Raja of Khallikote who threatned to resign from the Justice fold on account of differences with the Chief Minister on the *Inams Bill*, was also not very enthusiastic about his Party affiliation at that time.

With all such support, Pithapur came out to fight the elections, and he told the sparse audiences he addressed that *if people did not want to vote for him, they would, in the alternative, vote for the Congress!*

Pithapur spent twenty lakhs of rupees in the election campaign and got not a single seat for his Party ultimately! Many a desparado who came to him offering his services for propaganda and party organization, took his money and did nothing. Pithapur also ran an *English, Tamil* and



*Telugu* newspaper for propaganda purposes. Iswar Dutt, who edited his *English* paper the *People's Voice*, years later recorded in his book of reminiscences some caustic, but truthful comments about this peculiar venture of the Maharaja. He wrote :

“ It was a strange and fatal impulse that led the Maharaja of Pithapur to an adventure in politics in the South. It occurred to him in 1936 to spring a new Party one fine morning for fighting the general elections on a province-wide basis. It was a most surprising development, as his interests in life till then were largely, almost exclusively social.....Friends warned him against his plunge into politics which seemed to them as the merest gamble, but obstinate to the core of his being, he paid no heed to their counsel of caution.

“ People's Party consisted mostly of men who cared more for his money than for a seat in the legislature. It appeared to me that his prime intention was to fight the Justice Party led by the Raja of Bobbili whom he heartily disliked.

“ The Congress, at that time, had no definite policy except a general desire to capture the legislature. In a triangular contest, the new-comers stood little chance, but they could certainly have the satisfaction of splitting the non-Congress votes and preventing Bobbili and his men returning to office.”

Iswar Dutt put Pithapur's attitude

all too clearly here, and that was what really happened.

Then, after he had seen his *Waterloo* in the elections, a henchman of his Party saw Pithapur to console him for the election debacle. He told him :

“ I hope Maharaja Saheb will not brood over the calamity ”.

The reply of Pithapur then was one in lighter vein.

“ Brood ? On the otherhand, I had been laughing too much ! ”

Why shouldn't he ? To him, was politics anything serious ? Like Mr. Blank who having lost his life had nothing else to lose, the Maharaja having parted with his money, what else had he to lose ? If he had any political prestige to maintain, the election result should have stunned him, and cast him into a mood of sorrow.

### ***Britishers Back up Congress !***

Now, as the elections approached, there came a sudden turn in the outlook of the British Rulers in Madras. They found no more use for a loyalist Party like the Justicites ! The British preferred to get the Congress for Constitutional work, which was nothing surprising, since the British, as opportunists, were notorious



for their *divide and rule* policy, all throughout history. The British I. C. S. officers who had their grievances against the Raja of Bobbili for his Indianization of services moves, now worked against him in secret. K. V. Reddy, C. A. Souter, and some others had carried fantastic tales to Lord Erskine, the Governor, against the Raja, and the Governor was then, slowly inclined to support the Congress, if they were returned largely in the elections.

“It is immaterial who gets elected,” the top British officers went on telling the Police officers in the Districts. The British officials in the Vizagapatam District began talking lightly about the Raja who was all along much venerated in that part of the Presidency. “Congress will be the future Government,” Mr. G. T. Boag, a top British civilian went on tom-toming everywhere. The British Government allowed Government Pensioners to join the Congress, if they wanted to. Mr. C. F. Brackenbury, a Civilian went on saying that he would, any day, prefer to serve C. Rajagopalacharya than the Raja of Bobbili! Why so, he had no reason to give out!

Such was the attitude of the British officers, who having carried on their rule with the Constitutionally-minded Justice Party as far as possible, were now

planning to have new allies to prolong their hold on the country. Thus, the Raja to his surprise, saw a new force appearing against him to stifle the chances of his and his Party's victory in the general elections. But he did not mind. He would still go ahead with the courage that was always characteristic of him. Vexed, he once casually expressed his astonishment at the new-thinking the British Civilians in Madras had developed. Said he :

“ Here I am the Chief Minister, spending my own money and preaching loyalty to the British. For all that, this is the treatment for me ! ”

No wonder, an observer of the scene in Sir C. R. Reddy, writing to the *Mail* on December 17, 1936 said that the Congress trying to oust other Parties from coming to power, was not actually wrecking the Constitution, and added that the “ Congress policy was merely leading to beggary in the Government House.” Beggary for political power was what he meant.

The Madras newspapers, controlled by Brahmins in most cases, and edited by them as well, had all along been saying that the Justice Party was *communal* and *anti-Brahmin* and therefore, they would not in any way see reason to say even things which should have been said in



fairness in favour of the Justice Party. They were plainly hostile, and pro-Congress to the very core. Of that, we have little to complain of. The *Freedom of the Press* must be respected. They had a right to say what they wanted. All the same, the fact remained that newspapers never helped to win elections even in a well advanced country like the United States of America, as stated by Dr. Frank Luther Mott, the veteran Teacher of Journalism and author of several fine books in that country. Dr. Mott once wrote on this subject :

“ Out of 204 newspapers in the United States, more than 140 favoured John Adams in the Presidential election, but his opponent Jefferson was elected in 1801. In thirty seven elections for the U. S. Presidency, 18 winners had Press majority but 19 had Press minority; still the latter won.”

But, of the Madras Press, the same standards could not be said. Here, few read newspapers and fewer had discriminating powers as to which Party was on sound lines working, and which one stood for mirages in politics? The Madras Press, ofcourse, wielded some influence in swaying votes, it could not be denied.

The Congress Press and Platforms

roused up mass-hysteria in the general elections, and secured votes in large numbers for the Congress Party.

The type of election speeches delivered by Congressmen were sometimes intriguing. One speaker, was, for instance, heard at the Madras *Marina* saying:

“ If Congress comes to power, the foodless will have food, the homeless a home, the clothless clothes ”

Then, he fumbled to utter a strange promise. “ The taxless will have taxes ! ”

Since Freedom came to India and Congress rule commenced, the last assurance, ofcourse, has been truly and well fulfilled !

Pt. Jawharlal Nehru the then Congress President himself came to Madras for election propaganda for his Party in the *Fall* of 1936. In the Madras Corporation Council, a Congressman sought leave to move an adjournment motion to discuss presentation of a *Civic Address* to Nehru. Leave was refused by the Council by sixteen votes to eleven ! A year back, Rajendra Prasad when as Congress President visited Madras, the Corporation Council would not vote a Civic reception for him either !

When the Corporation Council met on



September 30, to consider the *Address* for Nehru, Ganapathi Chetti, who sat in the visitors' gallery, threw rotten eggs on the Councillors, who were *pro-Nehru*! Of-course, the intruder was taken out of the Chamber on a charge of criminal insult to the Council! We point out this incident here just to show that the mentality of the discerning people in Madras, generally, at that time was not very well disposed towards the Congress, but then, the Congress, did have mass-support, the people's emotions having been whipped up to stomach such slogans as a "vote for Congress meant winning *Swaraj*!"

### *The Bobbili Scene*

The contest in the Bobbili-Constituency in the Vizagapatam District was not all too keen between the Raja and Mr. V. V. Giri (Congress nominee) who has done splendid service for Indian *Labour*, as a Trade Unionist. Giri did not want to contest from that Constituency at all. His father the late Jogiah Pantulu was for long a *Standing Counsel* for the Bobbili Ruling House and therefore, Giri was abashed and didn't like breaking a long standing tie in human relations. But, the Congress insisted, and he had to obey orders.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu visited Bobbili and spoke to the people. She said nothing

against the Raja, since there was nothing to be said. She merely said that the *Zamindars* were slaves of the British Government, the Justice Party was communal, and the Congress stood for democracy.

After her visit went Jawharlal Nehru. Originally, he had no programme to visit Bobbili at all! Who made him go there, all of a sudden, there was no knowing. Strangely enough, the day he went there was his own birthday, November 14.

It was *Full-Moon Day* too, and in the local *Sri Venugopalaswamy Temple* a procession was arranged with decorated elephants and music, the idol to be taken out. When news reached that Jawhar was going there, the Temple authorities delayed the procession.

Nehru arrived in Bobbili by five in the evening and the venue of his meeting was also in front of the Temple where about 500 people had gathered for the religious procession. Nehru appeared to have misunderstood the crowd as hostile, called up to demonstrate against him, but he was told that it was not so. With him had gone T. Prakasam, the famous Congress leader.

Nehru then made a speech to those present, as he makes speeches even today,



to the assembled masses. In ten minutes, he had finished his oration. He, a *gentleman* that he is, never said even a word casting any reflection against the Raja personally. The only quotable sentence in his speech was that he found the *Zamindars* as helpers of British Rule in this country.

The moment he finished his speech, the drum of the Temple-band struck. Nehru at once pounced upon the band-master and wrenched from his hand the striking rod, to the amazement of all those present. It was nothing surprising for those who knew Nehru's school-boyish impulses even in these evening years of his life!

Roshen Sahib, the Moslem District Superintendent of Police who was on the spot then ordered the religious procession to be stopped. That roused the feelings of the people against the Police.

Nehru then drove away towards Vizianagaram and his visit for a few minutes, ofcourse, created a dramatic atmosphere in Bobbili.

The Raja was not that day in Bobbili at all. He was on a visit to Calcutta. In fact, he never worried much about his own election, did no canvassing with his people. If they wanted to vote for him, let them! That was his attitude, whereas

Congressmen were all too busy campaigning.

Finally, the election day showed the verdict of the people. The Raja secured about 18,000 votes and Giri had taken six thousands more. As usual, the Raja took the defeat with cool calmness, because he ever was a sportsman *par-excellence* even in politics. The Raja promptly telegraphed congratulating Giri, who ofcourse, acknowledged the message with gratitude.

The general results of the election showed that out of the four million voters in the Madras Presidency, two thirds had voted for the Congress. The Justicites were rooted out to the satisfaction of the Europeans, K. V. Reddy, the Maharaja of Pithapur, the Congress Party Bosses, the Madras Newspapers, and some reactionaries in South Indian politics. Ofcourse, they did not know, then, what they were missing! Today, they do understand and rally round the *Swatantra Party* for salvation from certain Congress policies like Co-operative Farming.

When heavy taxations crush the people, the voters do wonder what Congress Rule in the country meant for them. *During the Raja's Chief Ministership days, there never was a tax increased to rouse*



people's discontent. Neither were periodic public loans floated.

With the election defeat of his Party, the Raja's politics and Chief Ministership had come to a close. It re-established the old Bernard Shaw maxim that "the world and the Priests cannot comfortably jog on with a living saint" in politics. The Congress victory similarly re-told the age old truth as expounded by Anatole France that, "if fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing."

The Raja who had come into politics with the loftiest of motives, of serving people, had nothing for himself as gain for the brilliant part he played in the service of his country, his Madras Presidency. A total of *fifteen lakhs* of rupees from his own pocket went for the Party when he was Chief Minister. Not even his monthly salary, he could take for himself! But, he had no regrets. His conscience was clear. He had done his duty to the people, to the best of his ability with a willing heart, and who need lament over having done his duty in life fairly and squarely?

### ***The Interim Ministry***

The credit for the success of the elections for the Congress was attributed by T. Prakasam to that elderly political

priest C. Rajagopalacharya. He contested his seat from the Madras University and Gandhi wanted him to form the first Congress Ministry in Madras. When called upon by the Governor to do so early in 1937, Rajagopalacharya declined saying that the Congress High Command had decided to wrench an assurance from the Governor that he would not interfere in the day to day working of the Ministry by using reserve powers. Lord Erskine, the Governor, said he could give no such guarantee, even if he personally wished to. Rajagopalacharya called twice on Erskine and discussed the issue, but there was no solution to that knotty problem. But, the *King's Government* had to go on in Madras, and Erskine had to find alternatives. He tapped the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri to form a Government, which he, ofcourse, declined. Then, he began to call on the Justice Party politicians against whom the Provincial British Civilians had bitterly worked during the elections. Mahomed Usman and Erskine talked over, and the latter asked the former why he could not sound the Raja of Bobbili about it?

Meanwhile, on March 26, 1937 the Justice Party had taken a clear decision in the matter. No Partyman should have anything to do with an *Interim Ministry*, then thought of by the Governor. That



was also the wish of the supreme leader of the Party, the Raja.

Now, Annamalai Chettiar poked his nose into this matter for reasons of his own. He told the Raja of Bobbili: "We are loyalists. The Governor asks us to carry on the *King's Government* and we should agree." The Raja brushed aside the suggestion all too lightly, and told Chettiar not to worry about it any more, as far as the Justice Party was concerned.

Then, Mahomed Usman and the Raja met Erskine, when invited to the *Government House*. The Raja did not want to see the Governor at all, but he would not displease his friend Usman. So, he went. There, the news was broken that K. V. Reddy had showed willingness to form the Ministry and that he described himself as no longer belonging to the Justice Party. This information shocked Usman and the Raja, but they kept quiet. Then, Erskine asked the Raja how he would help in that crisis? "Appoint four Advisers to run the Government", said the Raja, whereupon Erskine thoughtlessly asked an impertinent question:

"In that case, would you take a place?"

The Raja's large, round, burning eyes brightened up with indignation which he,

ofcourse, suppressed all too quick, as he threw back the question :

“ Well, did you call me here to insult me ? ”

Usman too lightly flared up, as he told Erskine that the Governor seemed to be inclined to break the Justice Party with such a fantastic suggestion.

Whether he understood the true implication of what the Raja spoke or not, Erskine persisted :

“ I ask you both to help. I appeal to you in the name of the King. ”

The Raja replied :

“ Well, it is not in my hands at all now to do anything. ”

Then, Erskine revealed the astounding news that A. T. Pannirselvam and Muthia Chettiar, two Justicites, had informed the Governor that they would accept a place in the *Interim Ministry* ! They told the Governor that they were doing so as *Independents* !

The news shocked both Usman and the Raja. There had been a betrayal of the Party decision in secret by Reddy, Pannirselvam and Muthia Chettiar ! That both the Party decision and the leader had been ignored by them, seemed to be an insult to the Raja.



With his usual calmness of spirit, he thoughtfully returned from the *Government House*, though with evident disgust at heart. His point of view in the whole matter was that he, the leader of a defeated Party in the elections, would no longer be able to pose himself as a representative of the people by accepting ruling responsibility, temporarily or otherwise. Such was his honourable code of political conduct, which discerning folk all over the Presidency alone admired and paid tributes to him. Of the Raja it could be said :

*One equal temper of heroic heart,  
Made weak by time and fate,  
To strive, to seek, to find,  
But not to yield !*

Then, on *All Fools' Day*, April 1, K. V. Reddy formed the interim Ministry in Madras for what he said "to carry on the *King's Government*," as though without him, it was impossible ! Meanwhile, Rajagopalacharya witnessing this strange development, started on his usual business, touring about the country and criticising the Ministers who had gone into the Government through the back door. He described the *Interim Ministers* as *unprincipled men worth only eight annas in the rupee*. Quite true ! But no taunt from any source worried the power-mad *Interim* lot !

They carried on in office till July 14, when the Congress, after coming to a goody-goody understanding with their new friends, the British, took over the administration with Rajagopalacharya as Premier.

### *Resigns Leadership*

Soon after the formation of the Ministry, Rajagopalacharya appeared to have sent word in secret to the *Zamindars* to see that the Raja of Bobbili resigned the leadership of the Justice Party. The *Zamindars* met him and told him that in the *Zamindari Abolition Bill* the Congress proposed to bring in, if concessions had to be given them, the Raja should be out of the Justice Party. This is what they told the Raja, whether Rajagopalacharya said so or not.

The Raja who was more than surprised at what had been told him at first said, he would not resign at all! Then one of the *Zamindars* who called, asked: "so, for your sake should we all suffer?" That made him think for a while. He took time, and finally sent in his resignation. Thus was he released from the shackles of the suffering Justice Party politics. With his resignation meant the death-knell of the Party itself, a fact which the Congressmen, well realized. The long cherished wish of Congressmen as given out by men



like Satyamurthy that the Justice Party would be buried ten fathoms deep, had now been achieved. Also, Satyamurthy's description of the Party that it "is a flimsy facade, rotten to the core and will crumble to pieces at the slightest touch of the human hand," turned out to be a reality from the day the Raja sent in his resignation as the Party's leader.

Some of the important men of the Party, in the following years, signed the Congress pledge and sought elections, since they were the type of people who ran with the hares and hunted with the hounds. They had no scruples in life nor conviction of any laudable pattern. But the Raja, a man of principles, never turned a Congressman. To him, politics was now a dream of the past!

When the Congress became the ruling power of the land, he raised no opposition to it, in any way. When some Congressmen approached him for funds for the *Kasturba Memorial* in Bobbili, he gave away forty thousand rupees with a smile. Later still, when men like Prakasam and Pattabhi Sitaramayya wanted his help to start an *English* newspaper for the Congress in Madras called the *Indian Republic*, the Raja contributed two lakhs of rupees without a murmur.

As Japan was crumbling in 1945 facing war-defeat, the Raja raised the question of reparations for India. "We are victims of Jap aggression, and therefore, we should have compensation," he said.

The Japs could'nt pay in cash. Therefore, they should pay us in textile-machinery, he viewed.

A writer in the *Blitz*, Bombay, commenting about it said :

"The Raja Saheb of Bobbili has for the first time, raised the question as far as India is concerned. He says that until this question is settled, we should not go ahead with any discussion relating to the accumulated *Sterling* balances to our credit in England."

The Raja's was a lone voice. We got no war-compensation from Japan at all!

When his *Zamindari* was taken over by the Madras Government on September 7, 1949 the Raja who was then out of Bobbili, sent a simple telegram to his *Dewan*, "Hand over!" When Congressmen persuaded him to enter the Constituent Assembly, shortly after *Independence* was heralded, he acceded to their request only because he wanted to press the issue of the *Andhra Province*. There, he submitted a weighty



*Memorandum* pleading with the Government to effect quick separation of the *Andhra* area from Madras. Having done that simple duty, he quietly resigned from the Assembly. An Observer of his work and personality in those days was that fine man Rafi Ahamed Kidwai, who had a great regard for him. He said sometime in 1951 :

“ It is a pity that the Raja Saheb resigned all too suddenly from the Constituent Assembly. He is shrewd, intellectual, has great qualities of head and heart, thoroughly honest and such men should play a worthy part in the affairs of the country.”

The only public office the Raja held after leaving the Constituent Assembly was to be the Chairman of the *Industrial Finance Corporation* in Madras, after Shanmukham Chetty's death in 1953.

The Raja was never seen in any political or social functions since his Party leadership ended. He kept himself away. He was not for continuity in public life at all. For him, there was no more the lure of speech-making anywhere. The glare of the footlights had no fascination for this great leader and Statesman, once the curtain was drawn over, after his part was gloriously acted.

That is real greatness. Did not the great Chinese Philosopher Lao Tse describe such a true leader of the People in a poem, more than two thousand years ago?

*A leader is best when people barely know he exists  
But a good leader who talks little,  
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,  
They will say: " We did ourselves "*









SPORTSMAN  
*Trophies Abounding!*



## CHAPTER VI

### SPORTSMAN

The Raja of Bobbili is a renowned Sportsman, his chief interests being *Racing* and *Poló*. He is now *Chief Steward* of the Bangalore Race Club and *Steward* of the Southern India Turf Club. His interest on the turf seems to somehow sustain, though many of his other interests in sports have waned, as his personal *Business* responsibilities increased.

He is a keen student of world-racing. He gets racing literature-books and journals—from many countries and goes through them studiously to know how this sport of kings has been progressing here, there and everywhere. And, he is well acknowledged in this country as an expert on *horse-flesh*, since he has a knack of judging the best steeds even from a bare look at the animal.

From his twentieth year, the Raja had been interested in racing. Earlier to it, like all the boys of the ruling families in India, he had been a keen rider. Ofcourse, his initial interests in this sport began as he was often taken to the *Madras Races*

in the first decade of the present century, by his grand father the Maharaja Sir Venkata Swatchelapathi Ranga Rao, also by the father Raja Venkata Kumara Krishna Ranga Rao.

Though the Raja had been maintaining only a small string of horses, running them in the Madras, Calcutta and Bangalore races, he devoted a good deal of time for scientific studies of the problem of horse racing. He also imported many fine breeds from U. K., France, and lately from Pakistan.

Many of his horses had come out with colours and got him wins of a memorable character. At Bangalore, his *Sheet Anchor* won the Appollo Cup, and *Golden Lad* took the Steward's Cup. Alike at Calcutta, his *Multissimo* won the May Fowl Cup, *Sugar Daddy* the Independence Cup, *Courser* the Governor's Cup and *Will O' the wisp* the Wellesley Plate. At Madras, he had scored most of his triumphs. There, *Sir Amos* won the steward's Cup, *Courser* won the Governor's Cup, *Sweet Lavender* the Republican Cup and *Loyal Scott* took the Bangalore Cup. His *Rex* winning the Knowley Plate in Madras in December 1934 was a big victory for him. The win of his horse *Lady Josephine* for The 1000 Guineas prize for three-year old fillies at Guindy in



December 1959, was yet another racing triumph for the Raja. In a very limited way, he still has his steeds racing, and may be, he has still his innings to record, to an already admirable list.

This great Statesman's interest in horses does not stop with racing alone, for, he is one of the ablest Polo-players of India, widely acknowledged as such, during the last thirty years. The *Bobbili Polo-Team* has many triumphs to its credit in the South and North of the Country. Though he takes an occasional ride on horse back, he appears to have ceased playing polo himself these days. While he played the game at Ooty in his youth, his grand father the late Maharaja always watched with very keen interest and pride. At the same time, the grand old man was always apprehensive whether his beloved grandson did not run the risk of meeting with accidents, by some chance ! The Raja also played in the *Dasara Sports* at Mysore and in Jeypore ; often in Bobbili, his team gave a spectacular play.

On June 3, 1935, the Raja who was *knighthed*, was on leave of absence from the Governor of Madras to attend the Birthday celebrations of his late Highness Sir Sri Krishna Rajendra Wadayar Bahadur, Maharaja of Mysore. After the celebrations, the Raja arrived in Bangalore to

play polo. His interest in the game was evident from a letter he wrote to K. V. Reddy, then Law Member in Madras, who intimated the Raja about a dinner Party the Cabinet was giving the new Governor Lord Erskine and his wife. Seeking excuse, the Raja wrote: "I see that you and Sir Pannirselvam are giving a dinner to Lord and Lady Erskine on June 27. My engagements in connection with the Polo Tournament here absolutely prevent me from attending the function." Even such an important engagement as a dinner to his State's Governor appeared to the Raja no more than his zest for playing polo!

On June 23, the Raja with his *Bobbili* team met the *Kolanka* team in Bangalore on the Polo field and played a magnificent game, but then, a very unfortunate accident occurred, causing great anxiety to his friends in India and abroad. The Raja fell from his horse while taking a ball at full speed near the freeland's goal. The horse slipped and fell, bringing down the Raja to the ground. He was hurt, and was therefore, taken to the *Bowring Hospital*, from which daily *bulletins* were issued about his progress, for a week. Madras watched his stay at the hospital with concern, but when he returned to Madras, a great crowd welcomed him at the Central



Railway Station with cries of *Long Live Bobbili*.

The Raja's interest in Polo was so deep-rooted that in order to equip his own team with fine horses, he had taken a trip to far off Australia in his twenty-ninth year. Sailing from Colombo with a couple of manservants, he reached Melbourne after a voyage lasting a fortnight. He travelled very widely in that continent, visiting even remote villages to pick up his choice-polo ponies. At Sydney, he made some purchases, mostly *unbroken ponies*, meaning raw jungle species. He picked twenty of them, paying at an average ten thousands for each. He had them all marked *B.* and asked his agent to ship them to Calcutta, whence they had to be railed to Bobbili.

Australia where there was a great deal of interest in horse racing and dog-racing, fascinated the Raja who was amazed to see that even in small villages, there were race courses and hound-tracks. Since the Raja had been the first Indian patron of the Turf to personally get there to pick up horses and ponies, the newspapers in Melbourne and Sydney published a good deal of news material about his visit, flashing many interviews with him. The Raja's interest in *pig-sticking* and *fruit-picking* from horse back with long lances is also note worthy.

A passionate lover of horses, he may not cry out "a horse, a horse, a kingdom for my horse", as Shakespeare wrote in his play *Richard III*, but the Raja may yet, perhaps, feel one with Cunningham-Grahame who told President Theodore Roosevelt in 1917 that "God forbid that I should go to any Heaven in which there are no horses"!



## CHAPTER VII

### TRUE GREATNESS

The drama of a daring and dutiful life in Indian politics had been the story so far of the Raja of Bobbili; the scenes though short, are all the same animated, historical and significant. In this country where history and biography do not seem to be very important in the eyes of the people, the greatness of a towering personality of thought and action like the Raja had not been so far shown the appreciation that it widely merited.

A boy born in a Princely family, precocious and purposeful, grew up to fulfil the great expectations of his admirers. As a scholar in boyhood, he marvelled his tutors with the play of his brains in a wide range of studies. As a youth, he grew up on model lines, always devoted to thought, to shape himself for the future, to bear the burdens of life and fulfil the duties that he was called upon to perform by the people. As a Politician, the richness of his political wisdom enthralled those who were close to him, but his role in politics had been short, and it might as well be said in the Poet's lines that "one crowded hour of glorious life, is

worth an age without a name"! Though he started as a Politician of great potentialities, he ended up as a *Statesman* extraordinary. Said Sir Houghton Stokes, Finance Member of the Madras Cabinet, during the Raja's Chief Ministership days: "My respect and admiration for the character and personality of the Raja Saheb with whom I am now privileged for some years to work as a colleague in Government is very high indeed". Sir M. Krishnan Nair who was Law Member in the earlier part of the Raja in office once said, that with "excellent business habits and methods, he took time to decide any matter, but once decided a thing, was firm with it to the very last".

Once he played his historical role in public life for which he was called upon by the people, the Raja retired with the satisfaction of having done his duty. Like so many politicians in South India, he did not want to prolong his days in the public arena for more acclaim. That is because the Raja in his public life had everything to give the people, and nothing he had to take from them. The hymns of praise, the public *Addresses* and perfumed rose garlands he got, were his only rewards for his significant services! It is such a selfless life that he had as he wielded power which came to him un-



sought, and when it went out of his hands, he had no regrets either! In this respect, the Raja is like Stanley Baldwin, the *Tory* Prime Minister of England, a man of high character and dignity in politics, who today lives in absolute anonymity, having been historical in office when people demanded of him to serve the nation. "It is time my name ceased to fill the world", cried Victor Hugo with evident detachment, and the Raja thought similarly when his public services were over.

In what all he did, he was frank and fearless and footed the responsibility for his actions with a clear conscience. Throughout, his ideal had been, as William Lloyd Garrison put it.

*I am in earnest, I will not equivocate  
I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch  
And I will be heard*

Whether he was finally heard or not, he stood by his faith and worked on to the last. "To make an epoch in the world, two conditions are notoriously essential, a good head and a good inheritance", said Goethe, the great German, and the Raja had both, to his advantage in life. He made very good use of them in public life, as he went on serving the people.

Every inch a democrat, he viewed questions from the people's stand point, not his own, in every case. Why should a land holder, much against his own interests, attempt to pass the *Inams Bill*, if not for his ardent love to do justice to the suffering cultivator? Again, when E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, on returning from his visit to Russia in 1932 presented a *Socialist Programme* to the Raja, why did he, with all the grace, welcome it? Naicker's Plan was "nationalization of all public utility and major industries and re-distribution of land on equitable basis," and religion kept aside in the affairs of the State. When the Raja agreed with Naicker, Satyamurthi cried out vociferously that the Justice Party and the Raja had turned *Communist*! Yet, the Congress Party in office, after *Independence*, is now attempting all that Naicker wanted in the name of a Socialistic pattern of Society, including the State to be *secular* in character. Prophets are not heard in their own times, but when their prophecies become true, sometime, they are thought of in esteem.

The Raja carried on his four crowded years of office with a courage which no ordinary mortal could have possessed, atleast in South India. He found everywhere opposition to him, not on rhyme or reason, but out of blind prejudice that he



was an aristocrat by birth! No judicious examination of the man's selfless motives or his solid work, there had been! When he started Indianization in Government services, the European I. C. S. men rose against him. When he wanted to do justice to the cultivating class, the landed aristocracy opposed him. Within his own Party, disgruntled elements were always secretly trying to disown him. The Press and the Platform hurled criticisms against him continuously for the sake of make-believe political opposition, since they have it in South India, the function of the Opposition is to only somehow oppose! Amidst such vexing circumstances, no ordinary man would have remained in office and worked on, but it is a singular instance by itself that the Raja had the courage to out face these misfortunes. It was Ibzen who said that the *strongest man was he who stood alone*, and the Raja is truly a strong man of his times. He ploughed a lonely furrow to a definite objective, which he certainly accomplished in the end, though he had to put up with hard times in the process.

When one looked at the bitter all-round opposition the Raja had when he held office, the tribute of the Lord Mayor of London to Sir Winston Churchill at the opening of the latter's statue in August

1955, could well have been paid to this Indian Statesman also.

“To endure is greater than to dare; to tire out hostile fortune, to be daunted by no difficulty, to keep heart when all have lost it, to go through intrigue spotless, to forego even ambition when the end is gained, who can say this not greatness?”

In the Secretariat, he was admirable as an administrator. He was all too kind to the subordinates and would never lose temper even on the face of worst provocation. The most he would say in irritation to any Government staff would be, “you don’t seem to know!” A believer in hard work as his mission in life, he not only worked till late hours with files in office, but took them on tours and went through them in his railway *saloon*. And he had always the facts on his finger tips. For instance, he even knew the correct height of every water-fall in the Madras Presidency! Once when Satyamurthy quoted wrong statistics in the Legislative Council, the Raja corrected him. Flaring up, the Congressman said that he had the figures from the *Blue Books* published by the Government. The Raja persisted that the figures were wrong. Finally, it was found that Satyamurthy’s typist had erred in supplying the figures! So cocksure was the Raja of anything that he said.



He took time for each question he considered. After study, he jotted down points and thought over all the *pros and conce* of the matter. Then, he dictated to his *steno* the idea and studied it before making it public.

He was all for good relations with his subordinate officers. He occasionally called them to his residence and entertained them and talked over important issues. He had a methodical and systamatical way of working, giving preference to vital things first, in an orderly manner.

The one significant feature of his Chief Ministership is that the Government issued no ordinance or repressive law, choking people's liberties. Said Justice Brandes of the U. S. Supreme Court :

“The right to be left alone by Government is the most comprehensive of rights and the most valued by civilized men.”

In the legislature, the Raja was seen an able extempore speaker, and in his speeches, he never minced words. He gave no fantastic promises. He always told his hearers what he or his Government could do or not. He developed a personality which easily subdued fellowmen and in retort, he was powerful that he impressed one writer of those days as having made “C. R. Reddy who

usually roared like a lion to mew like a cat."

The Raja has always been a serious individual, in the main. Though he had an appreciation for humour, he was not very much humorous himself. Still, at times, a sort of dry humour came out of him, but then, he would not laugh at his own jokes!

At an evening Party he attended in Madras, a man tried to flatter the Raja with a pompous remark :

"Sir, you are the first person worth talking to, I meet here".

The cool reply then was :

"You are more fortunate than I am"!

And, no man the Raja counted in the world as his enemy. He entertained no primitive hates, and had a forgiving nature, once a confession of truth was made. It was said that he had not many friends in the world. That is true. He had lot of acquaintances ofcourse, but had a way of selecting few friends and with them, he was ever loyal. But, at times, even those whom he had trusted in business or helped in sheer sympathy had turned out very ungrateful to him. He never spoke to others about such indecencies on the part of those who betrayed his trust.



Since the Raja was free from politics in the closing years of the 1930s, he went into *Business*. Some of his enterprises were successful, but some had been miserable failures. If they failed, he alone was responsible for it. Burdened with over work, he could never give his personal attention to many of his business creations. Then, some of the men he had trusted also turned unworthy, letting him down badly. In all that, he had lost heavily too. The Raja who was the successful administrator of a big State like Madras, would not manage his own personal *Business* affairs all too well in some cases, not for want of brains, but for time and the interest he should have normally bestowed on them.

In money matters, he had his cherished principles. He would give away thousands to causes and people with a free will, but if he loaned five rupees to any, he would get it back at all costs! Once, a servant whom he authorized to buy a shirt for himself, bought two instead. The fellow was asked to surrender it! The cost of the extra apparel was also deducted from his wages.

The Raja believed in simplicity of living. He eschewed pomp and show, unlike most aristocrats in South India. He ate very little. One meal in a day was of

Western-cooking. He drank alcahol in medicinal proportion, and smoked incessantly *Dindigal Cheroots*. In the presence of women, he looked a bit shy, respectful and reserved towards them. He never went to a cinema, and often, after hard work, delighted himself in going for a little shooting with his gun, which gave him some mental relaxation. It was said of the late Maharaj of Kashmir Sir Pratap Singh that he pulled out his telephone in the Palace, saying that he was not answerable to any one on earth! The Raja had some such notion, perhaps, that he would not ordinarily answer any on the telephone! Messages had to be conveyed to him by servants and in a similar way, he told them to transmit his replies.

In the matter of religion, he was never too ardent. "He is neither too religious nor totally indifferent", an Uncle of his once gave out. He had no hates for *Brahmin* priests whom he engaged for all Palace rituals and for the weddings in his family. He observed the death-anniversary of his father and mother regularly. As Chief Minister, when he visited the Tirupathi Shrine, he took off his shoes in veneration to the Temple and walked on the burning rocks in the mid-day, with the result he got his tender feet blistered! He did not go on pilgrimages or special



worship. He believed that the *Kingdom of God is within*, as Jesus said, and what mattered to him was correct conduct in life, clean thoughts and pure deeds.

He is very unostentatious. He has changed with the times. When he travels in trains, he booked a whole compartment of four first class berths for himself and for his servants who must wait attendance on him, to attend to his needs during the journey. He never hired special railway saloons which he still could afford or travel in air-conditioned coaches. He has no hesitation to travel by public transports if an occasion so demanded. One day, he was coming down to Mettupalayam from Ooty to catch the *Nilgiris Express* and he travelled in a public transport bus, all alone, to the surprise of many.

The Raja is blessed with a happy family. The Rani Saheba Sri Lakshmi Subadrayamma is a gifted personality, but little had been known of her, she usually observing *purdha*, maintaining the family tradition. Yet, she discarded the veil at important *Government House* dinners, and during the war years when she performed excellent social service, as part of war-effort activities. Of late, she has taken to deep religious studies, developing spiritual interests.

There are his children, the first being Princess Indira Devi, a daughter. She is married. She had been a noted *Veena* player who had given several fine renderings of the instrument through the *All-India Radio*, in the past.

Next is his only son the Kumararaja Gopal Krishna Ranga Rao Bahadur who is now associated with Father in business. A charming youth, he is of clear vision in affairs and of rare ability. He is married.

The third child is Princess Lavanya Devi, now in her 'teens, and yet to be married.

To them all, the Raja is a devoted father who takes a keen interest in their progress. They are equally devoted to the Raja whom they fear and respect and these days, nothing gives him better happiness except his being with his family folk, at intervals.

Today, in all the *Andhra State*, there is no other *elder-statesman* of the Raja's calibre, and the twenty one million *Andhras* can still benefit from his rich political wisdom if they choose to, but then, the question is whether the Raja himself would ever feel like returning to public life. Long ago, when a friend told him that he was being thought of for a Governorship in Independent-India, he



merely shed a soft smile. A Governor in modern India had neither adequate money, nor power to do anything, and in such a setting, the Raja is never the man to prefer such an office. To him public office had never been a seat of mere power, but only an opportunity to serve fellow beings. Sir Archibald Nye, a former Governor of Madras once said that in South India, there was need for first class brains in Politics. But then, the pity of it all is, some of the brains of that description now happened to be rusting in the background of affairs, since Party prejudices weigh more with the Congress Rulers of the land than utilizing them for the good of the nation.

The Raja of Bobbili is a *Titan* of our times, the type of which we do not find in this or any other country, quite often. *Genius* and *Character* both conspired together to make this *Superman*, who having done his duty in life is now content to live his life in calmness, with a clean conscience. Politically, he might be forgotten, but how could any one who had known him in all the admirable aspects of his marvellous life? Indeed, he in their eyes, continues to shine as an out-sized diamond of great worth in this trumpery world!

THE END















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